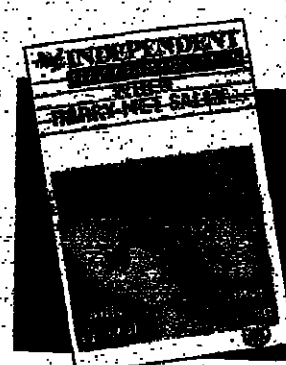




# THE INDEPENDENT

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TUESDAY 19 MARCH 1996 40p (IR 45p)



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Extravagance is back in fashion

Reports from the Paris catwalks

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## Tory summit on 'feelgood factor' crisis

Major offensive as polls slump

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major has summoned senior ministers to a Cabinet summit meeting tomorrow to try to solve the mystery of the missing "feelgood factor".

Ministers are anxious because the Tories have failed to gain an improvement in the opinion polls despite the fact that the factors for a recovery are all in place, including interest rates at their lowest level for a generation, inflation at its lowest for half a century, and the housing market starting to take off.

Mr Major is frustrated about the failure of the economic "good news" to convince the electorate. Morale among Tory MPs remains at rock bottom and many admit they expect defeat at the next general election over Labour's campaign message that it is "time for a change".

The Prime Minister is concerned that economic good news, traditionally seen as a vote winner for governments at the end of their term, may not save the Tories. High on the agenda will be job insecurity, with one in four of the working population having tasted unemployment since the election in 1992.

Ministers are preparing to target the Labour leadership as part of the fight-back, and senior Tory figures have indicated they are ready for a dirty campaign. They are looking for another embarrassing defeat from above similar to the Harry Harman row.

Ministers plan to exploit splits in the Labour Party over Mr Harman. As the Cabinet is meeting, the Parliamentary

Labour Party will be debating a call to bring forward the Shadow Cabinet election from November to July, which could lead to Ms Harman being voted out.

Tony Blair could face the dilemma of appointing Ms Harman to his team, and risk a new rift with Labour MPs who are still angry with her, over the decision to send her son to a grammar school.



Tony Blair: Tories will try to exploit divisions in his party

The key item on the Cabinet agenda will be a strategy for dealing with the appeal of the Labour leader to wavering Tory voters, by insisting Labour has not dropped Socialism, in spite of its repackaging as "new Labour".

The head of the Conservative research department, Danny Finkelstein, who has mapped out the strategy, has taken ministers to task over the way they deal with Mr Blair. When the Labour leader launched his "stakeholder economy", he was attacked for stealing Conservative policy by Michael Portillo, who was in Japan, while

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, said there was a hidden Socialist agenda.

Mr Finkelstein will advise the Cabinet to stop claiming Mr Blair is a closet Conservative. Tory leaders will be told to stress the Labour Party is sticking to Socialist policies. Ministers will be urged to counter attempts by Labour to jettison unpopular policies, such as the abolition of GP fundholding and selection in schools. The campaign will run a Labour score campaign.

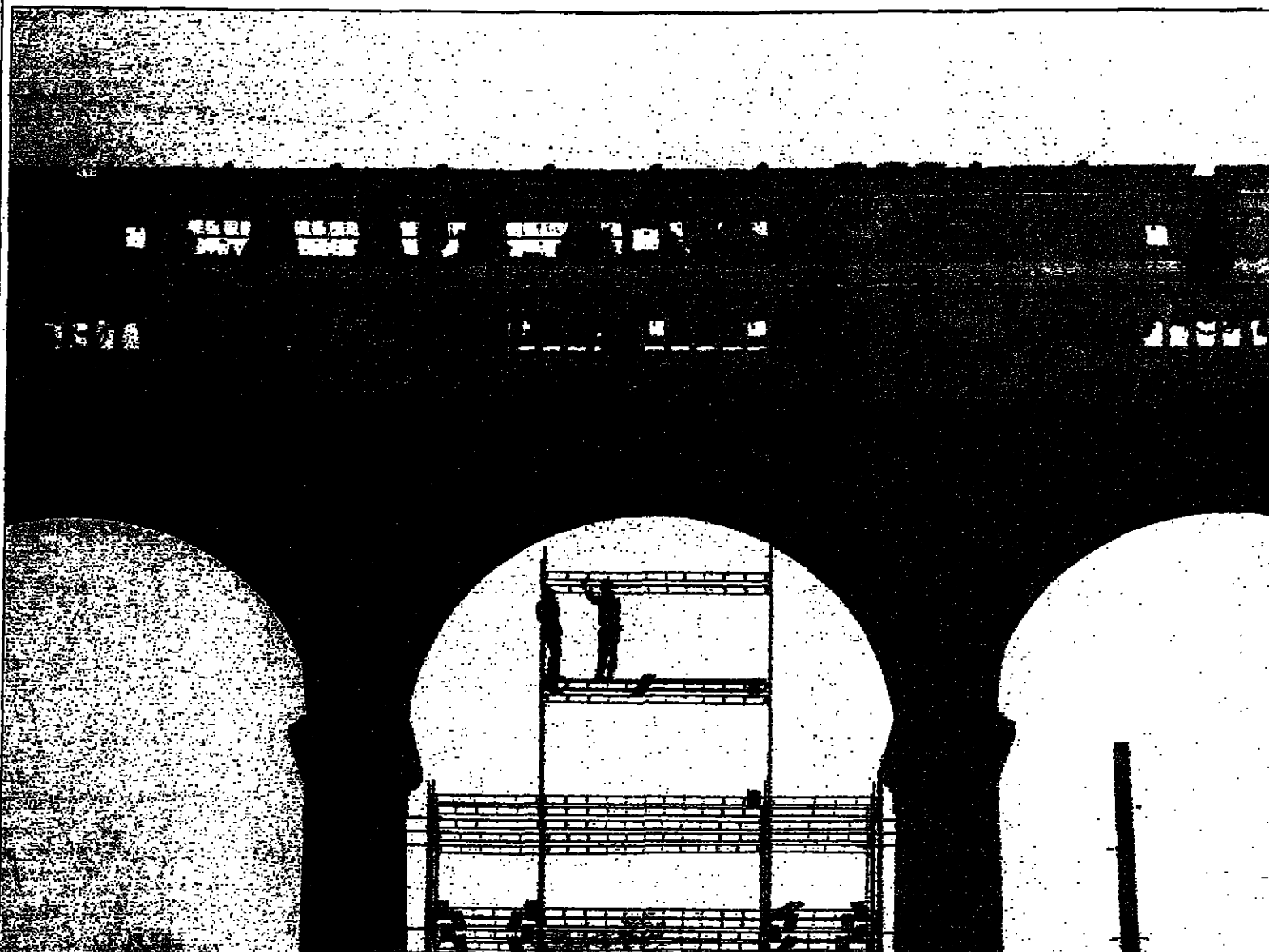
Mr Major will try to raise the Tories' appeal in a speech tomorrow to the Social Market Foundation, outlining his vision for an "opportunity Britain". Mr Blair also plans a speech on Labour's plans for small businesses - traditionally seen as Tory supporters.

Some senior ministers believe the Scott inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair blew the Government off course.

The Tories intend to use the spring council meeting in Harrogate as the launch-pad for a fight-back. Cabinet ministers will be asked to speak on the first day, including Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, Mr Heseltine, and Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman. Mr Major will speak on Saturday before flying to Turin for the IGC.

Mr Clarke is digging in his heels against a referendum which his Cabinet colleagues believe may unite the party. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, yesterday used evidence to the Foreign Affairs Commons select committee to kill speculation the Government could ignore the results of a referendum on a single European currency.

## Waterloo for BR as French take over



French connection: A Network SouthCentral train crosses the Ouse Valley viaduct on its way from London to Brighton

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

A French company is expected to be given the franchise to run one of Britain's busiest commuter rail networks.

Compagnie Générale des Eaux is expected to be told by the franchising director, Roger Salmon, it has become the sole preferred bidder for the franchise for Network SouthCentral, which runs the train services from Victoria and London Bridge stations to the south coast between Hastings and Southampton and many shorter suburban routes.

The French conglomerate

already has significant interests in the UK, including the Onyx street cleaning and refuse collection services and several small water companies with a total of 3 million customers.

It narrowly missed out on winning the franchise for South West Trains last month but this time it has beaten off a combined challenge from Stagecoach, which won the South West franchise, and another bus company, National Express.

National Express is thought to be the favourite to win the franchise for Midland Main Line, the InterCity services out of St Pancras, also due to be announced this week. But the third franchise at the final bid stage, Gatwick Express, is an open contest between the management buy-out team, which has linked up with British Airways, and Richard Branson's Virgin group.

Claims by Mr Branson that Virgin had won the franchise were being discounted last night by sources close to Mr Salmon. Both have agreed to pay to operate the line, rather than receive subsidy, as Gatwick Express is the only profitable franchise of the 25 on the network.

Currently, British Rail receives about £51m a year in subsidy to run Network SouthCentral services and the new operator is expected to receive about the same amount initially, but a reduced amount each year over the period of the seven-year franchise.

On Friday *The Independent* revealed that the Bermuda-based ferry company, Sea Containers, had won the franchise for the East Coast Main Line. South West Trains and Great Western Trains, the first two privatised lines, started operating under their new operators on 4 February and the four new private operators are expected to take over from BR within the next couple of months.



## Water firm 'planned to move 1m people'

PAUL FIELD

Yorkshire Water asked local authorities to consider a plan to evacuate up to a million people from their homes and businesses as last summer's drought hit water supplies in the region, an inquiry was told yesterday.

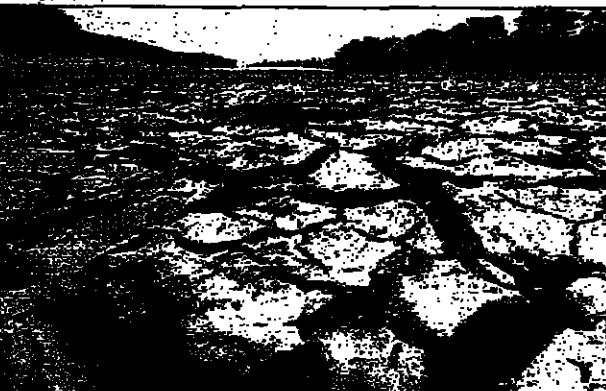
The extent of the crisis was such that lives would have been lost, schools closed and businesses plunged into financial crisis if reservoirs had run dry and standpipes and rota cuts been introduced, it was claimed.

The grim picture was painted on the first day of a public inquiry into how Yorkshire Water dealt with the drought. The evacuation plan was ruled out by local authorities and the privatised water company had to top up supplies in a £3m a week tankering operation that ferried in 60 tons of water a day.

Yorkshire Water, whose managing director Trevor Newton announced his resignation last week, was plagued by claims that a quarter of supplies were lost through leakage and it was ill equipped to tackle the crisis.

The independent inquiry, chaired by Professor John Uff, a barrister and water engineer, is expected to last two weeks. The hearing at Leeds Town Hall was told that the Department of the Environment has no plans to submit a report despite an invitation to do so. Ofwat, the water regulator, has announced it is carrying out its own inquiry into the crisis.

In its submission presented yesterday, Bradford Council said the evacuation option was a desperate measure suggested by Yorkshire Water after it ruled out the use of tankers to bring in supplies. That decision



Cracking up: An aerial view of Fawcett Reservoir, the feeder reservoir for Bradford, near Blubberhouses in North Yorkshire

was later reversed. Bradford said last night that the evacuation plan was "judicious".

Tony Kihner, representing Bradford Council told the inquiry: "Yorkshire Water had no

emergency plans for a drought situation. With the prospect of standpipes it could have been disastrous." The effect of rationing would be devastating, he added: "Public services

would have been stretched to breaking point. Social services believe the effects of rota cuts would have been catastrophic."

Schools would have been forced to close because teachers would have been unable to maintain minimum standards of hygiene in the classroom.

Dr Chris Worth, director of public health for the West Yorkshire Health Authority, said Yorkshire Water failed to foresee the serious public health implications of a reduction or possible cessation of water supplies. "The health and well being of the population at large of West Yorkshire were under serious threat had the proposed rota cuts gone ahead. Lives could have been lost."

The Yorkshire Water Chamber of Commerce told the inquiry its members suffered losses in preparing for the worst

case scenario and blamed Yorkshire Water. "There was a slow reaction throughout. They were praying for rain."

John Holroyd, a barrister representing Yorkshire Water, made it clear that the company would robustly defend its handling of the drought although he admitted there were lessons to be learned. He emphasised its position should be considered against a background of low rainfall and increased demand which led to the rapid depletion of reservoirs.

He claimed the Yorkshire Water has been able to reduce the probability of rota cuts with an £100m programme of new pipelines and pumping stations.

Yorkshire Water last night issues a statement denying the claims by Bradford council had ever been discussed at senior level.

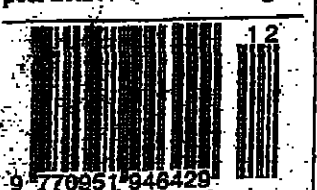
### IN BRIEF

#### Heroin 'epidemic'

Britain is on the verge of a heroin epidemic with seizures of the drug up 80 per cent to a record total last year. Page 6

#### Rose West appeals

No direct evidence linked Rose West with the 10 murders she was convicted of at a trial on which the media had had "a major influence." The Court of Appeal heard. Page 5



## Mandela: Winnie made me the loneliest man

ROBERT BLOCK  
Johannesburg

There was a fleeting moment when the sadness left Nelson Mandela's face at his divorce trial in Johannesburg yesterday. It was when his estranged wife, Winnie, first entered the courtroom. He caught sight of her, and for a moment, smiled. She, in response, turned away.

If there were any lingering doubts in the South African President's mind over his decision to end his 38 years with a woman whom he once worshipped, they must have faded away in that moment.

It was not long after that Mr Mandela told a court packed with journalists, television cameras and the curious: "If the entire universe persuaded me to reconcile with the defendant I would not... I am determined to get rid of the marriage."

Once the icons of the anti-apartheid struggle, Nelson and Winnie Mandela are almost certain to be, finally and officially, divorced.

Mr Mandela's lawyer, Wim Trengove, argued that the President's marriage was beyond repair. He said Mr Mandela rejected his estranged wife's assertion that any arbitration

could bring the two back together. There was, Mr Trengove said, simply nothing to salvage.

But it took the man himself to bring home that message. Composed but visibly sorrowful, Mr Mandela told how his wife accomplished in two years what 27 years in prison failed to achieve: she made him feel humiliated and lonely. "Ever since I came back from prison, not once has the defendant ever entered our bedroom while I was awake," the 77-year-old President told the Rand Supreme Court in Johannesburg.

"The bedroom is where a man and woman discuss the

most intimate details. There were so many things I wanted to discuss with her, but she is the type of person who fears confrontation. I was the loneliest man during the period I stayed with her."

The President initiated divorce proceedings in 1992, two years after his release from jail. Mr Mandela told the court that it was her "brazen conduct" which convinced him to end the marriage. He then recounted how in August 1992 he was given a letter supposedly written by Mrs Mandela which confirmed his suspicions of her infidelity with a young lawyer

from the African National Congress. He said had tried to make the parting as painless as possible for the benefit of their two daughters, Zindzi and Zenani, but felt compelled to disclose the affair. "I did not wish us to wash our dirty linen in public," he said.

Mr Mandela will be questioned today by his wife's lawyer. Mrs Mandela is expected to take the stand tomorrow when her counter claim to assess her husband's estate is heard: she is seeking at least half. It may be a small price compared to what the President said she has already taken.

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news

# Rock's role must remain mystery for time being

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Correspondent

A piece of bright blue rock now puzzling mineralogists in the Natural History Museum may mark one of the rarest events on earth - a tourist getting the best of a deal with a Moroccan trader.

When Anna Grayson, a geologist, came across the first-sized lump of rock at a roadside souvenir stall in Morocco 15 years ago, its seller assured her that it was lapis lazuli - well-known for its blue colour and exotic associations.

The stallholder sold it to Mrs Grayson for the equivalent of a few pounds, confident that he had passed on a piece of the relatively common mineral to one of the millions of visitors who buy up Morocco's economy. But Mrs Grayson realised she had found something unusual, though her scientific training could not identify it. Until last year, she had left it at her home in Watford.

Then, during National Science Week, she took it to the Natural History Museum, which was offering to identify mysterious objects. Experts there soon found that the min-

eral's structure and composition, a mixture of calcium, iron, aluminium, silicon, oxygen and a pinch of sulphur, was not listed among the 71,000 officially registered minerals.

"We are still trying to work on the structure of the crystals," said Dr Gordon Cressey, deputy head of the mineralogy department. "We are trying X-ray diffraction and scanning electron microscopes, which takes you pretty close to the atomic level. The crystals are very, very small. And it's so blue that when you look at light through it, it's like seeing a miniature stained glass window."

"It must have been known in antique times," said Dr Cressey. "In fact, there must be a cliff face made just of this blue rock somewhere in the Atlas mountains [in southern Morocco]."

About 40 new minerals are discovered every year, but rarely in such large amounts. But while Morocco's traders may have lost out in selling it, they could still get the last laugh. To fully document a new mineral, its place of origin must be included. This would almost certainly require the services of a local guide - at a rate to be negotiated.



Secrets of the stone: Anna Grayson with the piece of blue rock that has defied analysis at the Natural History Museum

Photograph: PA

Aftermath of massacre: Investigation into killer's past raises suspicions over income as first funerals of victims take place

# Hamilton 'may have had secret illegal income'

JAMES CUSICK

Thomas Hamilton had been interviewed by his local district council "several times" in the past 18 months over growing concern that he was lying about how he managed to live.

Stirling District Council granted Hamilton 100 per cent housing benefit on the £32 per week rent he should have been paying for his council flat in Kent Road, Stirling. However the council was aware that since November 1993 Hamilton had not registered as being unemployed and was receiving no other benefits. In interviews and correspondence, the council quizzed Hamilton on where he got the money to live. More than one letter asked how he managed to "live on fresh air".

According to a senior council source there had been concern that Hamilton "must have had illegal earnings".

A spokesman for the council said: "We knew what he was telling us just did not add up. He said he was a photographer yet he said he had no income. He showed us a few receipts for his work but they were for only minuscule amounts."

Officials said that as he had no money they had a duty to grant him full housing benefit.

Last year Stirling district learned that Hamilton had received money from photographic equipment he sold "worth thousands". However he claimed he had been merely "converting capital equipment" and he continued to receive his full housing benefit.

Why the council did not investigate his potential illegal earnings will be yet another area that will feature in the inquiry into the Dunblane killings by Lord Cullen.

If Hamilton had no income, how did he finance his two hobbies: photography and guns? Just after Christmas last year Hamilton spent more than £200 on ammunition for his weapons. Gun club fees of more than £50 per year, rifle association levies, range fees, and, according to gun experts, "upwards of £20 a month on ammunition"; all cannot be reconciled with a man who has no income.

With local photographic processors having refused to handle Hamilton's work it is understood he was forced to use expensive private developers



Hamilton: Income doubts

in Glasgow and Edinburgh. There is also his recently purchased .357 Magnum handgun. Even secondhand such a weapon costs several hundred pounds.

It is understood from police sources in Glasgow that a police inquiry into Hamilton's background will deal with Hamilton's possible role as a provider of paedophile photographic material. One detective in Strathclyde police specialising in vice, told the Independent Hamilton may have had the potential for blackmail from photographs.

The Government was last night resisting pressure for early reform of the gun laws in the wake of the Dunblane massacre - despite growing backbench demands for tighter controls.

Downing Street said it would want time to study the findings of the Cullen inquiry before deciding what course of action to take.

MARY BRAID  
AND JOHN CLARK

They were baptised together, every Sunday they sat in the front row of church together and yesterday best friends Joanna Ross and Emma Crozier, both 5, were laid to rest together. Hundreds of mourners attended the girls' funerals yesterday morning in a country church, the first for the 16 schoolchildren and their teacher murdered by gunman Thomas Hamilton.

As with so many religious services held in the last six days, the congregation proved too large for the kirk. About 500 people stood outside the 19th century Lecropt Church, where the girls' families worshipped while they attended Sunday school. The sermon was relayed by speakers. The hymns they sang were children's hymns: "All Things Bright and Beautiful", "Jesus Loves Me" and the girls' Sunday school favourite "Give Me Joy in My Heart".

Joanna's grandfather, Jimmy Ross, is an elder at Lecropt as is Emma's father, John. The girls were known as little characters and favourites with the Lecropt's Presbyterian congregation. Joanna's uncle, Gareth Jones, speaking on behalf of

both families, and the Rev William Gilmour told the gathering that while the girls had been best friends they had very different personalities.

Emma was "quiet and biddable", Joanna, "more headstrong". The families had encouraged their friendship, sure that something of each would rub off on the other. The two girls are seen standing side by side in their class photograph.

Mr Jones offered a few anecdotes from their lives. There was the time Joanna cut Emma's hair and a professional had to be called in to right a rather botched job. The stories raised some smiles and even some laughter on a day that was otherwise stamped with sorrow.

Mr Gilmour said: "To their respective parents each child was precious, loved dearly and cared for tenderly at home. We can appreciate their high hopes for the future womanhood of Emma and Joanna." It was tragic that neither girl was allowed to fulfilled parental aspirations, he added.

Later yesterday the funeral of "blonde and pretty" Abigail McLennan, five, was held at St Blane's church in Dunblane High Street. Flowers lined the pavement outside the old church a stone's throw from the

cathedral where the Queen and Princess Royal started their visit on Sunday.

As the tiny white coffin was taken from the church at the end of the service dozens of townspeople stood watching, eyes downcast and in silence.

And as mourners left, others were already arriving for the funeral of Kevin Hasell, five, also held at St Blane's. Kevin was described as a "bunch of mischief".

The funerals continue today with services for six more children. There will be four tomorrow and three, including teacher Gwenne Mayor, on Thursday.

By yesterday morning, most journalists had left Dunblane and those remaining were set to follow. There have been widespread appeals for the town now to be left alone to grieve.

Two boys wounded in the attack, Ben Vallance and Robert Purves, were yesterday allowed home from hospital. A spokesman for Stirling Royal Infirmary said: "They will require further hospital treatment. The other three children and two female teachers who are patients in our care, are continuing to make good progress."

This article was based on a pooled report by the Press Association

# Best friends together forever in life and death

# Support grows for fitting new TV sets with 'V-chip'

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Media Correspondent

The Government has pledged to consult the broadcasting industry on introducing a V-chip to allow censorship of programmes - although it may be almost impossible to introduce on a national level.

Short for "violence chip", it can be fitted inside television sets to pick up signals built into every programme. If the code shows a level of sex or violence over a pre-set maximum, the set switches channels. Pressure is growing for censorship after President Clinton agreed last month to installation of V-chips in all new sets sold in the US.

Last month the European Parliament followed his lead by voting for V-chips to be installed in all new sets sold in Europe, although this measure may not reach the statute book.

But the concern to maintain broadcasting standards is close to the heart of Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, who yesterday acknowledged fears about the effect of television violence on children.

"It may be that the V-chip offers help and we are looking to see if it will work in practice," she said. "If a V-chip helps parents exercise their responsibility, then all to the good."

The Heritage Department has had talks on the subject with regulators, and will also consult broadcasters, viewers and advertisers. However, the danger of a unilateral measure is that it could fall foul of European single-market restrictions. It would also be difficult, because foreign programmes available on cable or satellite would not contain a V-chip signal.

Another problem would be that such a measure could prevent the sale of many foreign-made television sets. Given the 15-20-year life span of television sets, it would also be a long time before it took effect.

Nevertheless, David Alton, the Liberal Democrat MP for Mossley Hill, has threatened to put down an amendment to the Broadcasting Bill to make V-chips compulsory if Mrs Bot-

tomley does not legislate. The introduction of the V-chip has received guarded support from much of the industry, except for advertisers, and the debate on the issue is welcomed by Labour.

Lady Howe, chairman of the Broadcasting Standards Council, said: "If it can be done and the cost is not prohibitive, then it is a good idea, but it won't solve all problems."

But James Ferman, director of the British Board of Film Classification, said: "Remember that it's only new sets that will have this chip in and the old sets tend to go into kids' bedrooms. I fear the children most in need of protection are the ones least likely to get it."

Meanwhile, the Anglo-French channel tunnel company, Eurotunnel, used another Anglo-French group, Transmanche Link to build the project.

A few years ago the French funeral firm Pompes Funeraires Generales moved aggressively into the UK. But the tables were turned when the business was taken over by SCI of Texas, the biggest funeral company in the world.

# Hands across the water industry

Anglo-French business partnerships are well established, writes Peter Rodgers

But Anglo-French business links are noticeable more by their rarity than by their prominence in the economy.

One successful Anglo-French partnership is in the drinks industry, where LVMH, the French drinks group that owns Moet Hennessy, controls 20 per cent of Guinness. In return Guinness owns 30 per cent of the Moet Hennessy offshoot of LVMH.

This cross-shareholding deal is typical of the relationship between French and British

industry, where partnerships rather than aggressive takeovers have been the norm. There is no Anglo-French equivalent of the giant Anglo-Dutch combines Shell and Unilever.

Among the better known partnerships are GEC-Alsthon, a jointly owned company in the power generation business, Airbus Industrie, the aviation consortium in which British Aerospace has a stake, and ATR, an Anglo-Italian-French constructor of small commercial aircraft.

In the construction industry, the second Severn crossing is being built by a joint venture between John Laing and GTM-Entrepose, a French construction company.

Meanwhile, the Anglo-French channel tunnel company, Eurotunnel, used another Anglo-French group, Transmanche Link to build the project.

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## IN BRIEF

### Boy, 14, arrested after gun thefts

A teenage runaway was arrested yesterday in connection with the theft from a pensioner of two rifles and two handguns.

The boy, 14, was being questioned by police last night after a massive manhunt. He was detained, along with a 16-year-old, at a house in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

The four weapons - two .22 calibre rifles and two .22 calibre handguns - had been stolen from Peter Preston, 67, last Friday. They were part of a collection kept in a secure box at Mr Preston's house close to the boy's home at Chalfont St Peter.

### Police pay damages

An Irish man was paid £7,500 damages and costs by the Metropolitan Police after he claimed two officers beat him up and one racially abused him. Paul Moran, 32, alleges that he was walking away from his home in west London at about midnight in December 1992 when a police vehicle stopped and PC Keith Lloyd and PC Ian Whitely got out and seized him.

### Brothers' ban lifted

Coventry City Council abandoned its High Court legal action against John Fennie, 30, and his brother David, 27, who were banned in February last year from entering part of the Stoken Heath housing estate after allegations that they were connected with crime and were bringing fear to the neighbourhood.

### Taxi death

A taxi driver appeared before Hertford magistrates charged with causing death by dangerous driving after Carol Watkinson, 23, died last Friday after being trapped in his cab for more than 35 minutes in the River Stort in Sawbridgeworth. Terence Williams, 55, was remanded on bail until 13 May.

### Homes blight review

Government officials are to investigate blight suffered by homeowners living along the planned route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and other major projects. A working group will review the scope, cause and effects of blight and whether any changes can be made to arrangements for property purchase and compensation.

### Beach huts taxed

Owners of beach huts at Mudeford Sands, Christchurch, Dorset, are legally obliged to pay council tax. A High Court judge ruled. He said a local valuation tribunal was wrong in law when it decided 340 huts were exempt from the tax. The decision could affect thousands of holiday-makers around the country.

### Benefit soars

The amount of benefit paid to people in work has more than doubled over the past five years, figures published by a Labour MP show. The increase - from just over £1bn a year in 1990 to more than £2.3bn last year - is the result of employers taking advantage of the welfare system to hire employees at rock-bottom wages, Denis MacShane, the MP for Rotherham, said.

### Vet loses appeal

Ryan James, the vet jailed for life at Stafford Crown Court last May for poisoning his wife, has lost his appeal against conviction. James, 41, a partner in a practice at Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire, was alleged to have killed Sandra, 39, by lacing her orange juice with lithium, a drug used to immobilise horses, so he could collect her £180,000 life insurance and start a new life with his mistress, Catherine Crooks. James married Mrs Crooks at Gartree top security jail, Leicestershire, last September.

### Rumbles in heaven

When British Airways upgraded its first-class service to provide pyjamas, duck-down duvets and fully reclining beds, it wanted to make its passengers feel at home. But it was a little too effective. Now the airline is having to employ the tactics of the England Rugby team to stop its passengers snoring. The nasal strips used by captain Will Carrington and his team to aid breathing have been adopted by BA to stop passengers in its business and first class seats keeping each other awake.

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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## Privatised benefits offices in shambles

CHRIS BLACKHURST  
Westminster Correspondent

A privatisation contract to run part of the Benefits Agency has resulted in a shambles, with performance targets not being met and officials expressing doubts it is yielding any savings at all, according to a management consultants' report prepared for the Agency.

So bad have things become, says the report, a copy of which has been passed to the Independent, that "relationships between all parties are strained. There is a lack of goodwill and a lack of trust".

The report from In Depth Consulting focuses on the three-year contract to BET, the giant office services group - currently the subject of a £1.9bn takeover bid from Rentokil - to run the back offices of the Benefits Agency in Lancashire and Cumbria.

BET's brief was to handle typing, open the mail, run the messenger service, ensure stationery supplies were up to demand and operate security for the Agency's branches across the region, starting in January last year. The result, concludes the report, was a disaster. In Blackpool, the report says, the company did not provide adequate security cover. A security guard "persistently failed to intervene to prevent anti-social behaviour by [Agency] customers", writes In Depth, adding that overall security "is an area of concern".

Benefits Agency staff were also left without stationery and last September, BET failed to meet 43 per cent of the targets set for opening post from claimants. This was caused by

"under-resourcing on the part of the contractor" and, the report acknowledges, the mail-bag being greater than expected. Another disaster area was typing. Again, writes In Depth, "BET under-resourcing appears to be a key factor. Typists are frequently taken to cover switchboard and post-opening duties".

If problems arise BET staff were reluctant to raise the issues with management "as they fear that this will rebound on them and be taken as an indication of their own inefficiency". What In Depth describes as "anecdotal information" suggests "BET quality assurance amounts to disciplinary action against the individual if a problem is raised". In one of the most telling phrases, BET's staff, says the report, "have feelings of frustration with BET equal to those of the customers".

To get around the shortcomings, Agency staff are ordering stationery direct, doing their own typing, and opening mail themselves. This is likely to defeat the object of contracting out and cast doubt over the value of the privatisation.

John Hutton, MP for Barrow and Furness, who obtained the In Depth report, said it revealed "the triumph of political dogma over common sense". It was obvious, he said, that the promised savings to the taxpayer from allowing BET to run the services was "just not materialising".

A BET spokesman said the report related to "start-up difficulties". Staff numbers, he said, had since been increased. "Inevitably," he added, "when a new supplier comes on site there is a lot of learning to be done."

## Hunt escapes action over playground kill

Police are taking no further action against a fox hunt which allowed its hounds to kill a fox in a school playground.

Children aged between five and ten watched the fox being torn apart through a classroom window at Langcliffe primary school in the Yorkshire Dales last week. The hounds jumped a wall into the playground to catch their quarry.

The headteacher Hilary Foster said she was "horrified and appalled" by the incident which

had left some of her 44 pupils "shaken" and "frightened".

Eddie Braithwaite, chairman of the Lunsdale hunt, said the hounds became separated during a chase and deeply regretted the playground killing. "We are holding a special meeting to ensure it doesn't happen again."

A spokesman for North Yorkshire police said the hunt had apologised to the school. "They don't make a habit of this so that is the end of the matter as far as we are concerned."

Rock of ages: More shock 'n roll in store as Seventies anti-heroes make comeback



The boys are back: From left, Sex Pistols Paul Cook, John Lydon, Steve Jones and Glen Matlock celebrate yesterday. Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

## Pistols at dawn of a new era

It was the usual thing. Loud-speakers played a medley of patriotic numbers from the Second World War, while six-foot transvestite waitresses passed around bacon-burgers, served from metal film canisters. Much what you would expect from a press showing in the red-walled basement of the 100 Club in London's Oxford Street.

About three hundred of us were crushed into this airless hole - with any distinction between passive and active smoking purely academic - to herald the relaunch of the Sex Pistols. Earnest foreigners, holders of degrees and diplomas in the semiotics of British rock, rubbed shoulders and everything else with celebrity journalists, photographers and elderly hangers-on from the demi-monde of popular music.

The Bill Grundy interview of 1 December 1976 (a date that will live in infamy) was being reshown. Only five years of the Osmonds and David Cassidy could possibly have gullied seventies Britain into believing the Pistols were obscure and a threat to society. The fresh-faced Lydon et al, clearly embarrassed, were manipulated into saying "shit" on screen. The credits told us the producer had been a Tony Bukey.

Downwind, behind a wall of expensive aftershave, leather

jackets and bouffant hairpieces, came the first approaching sounds of the boys themselves. "Where", it went. And "whoa, whorrr". The crowd parted and a small group of nice-looking chaps in early middle age, clutching beer bottles, made their way to a low dais. So there they were, the anarchists and the anti-christs: John Lydon aka Johnny Rotten. Paul Cook, Glen Matlock and Steve Jones - together again. Lydon, as ever the sharpest, his hair shaped into a "McLaren", attempting to escape upwards from his head, retains the prehensile upper lip and rodentine teeth of his youth. His slightly bulkier frame was squeezed into a sleeveless red hunting jerkin, decorated with horizontal leather tabs beneath which he wore a flowing white chemise. The ensemble could have been borrowed from Cliff's Wuthering Heights.

If Rotten exuded a mellow acerbity, his mates were genu-



DAVID AARONOVITCH



Anarchy reigns: The Pistols sign a record deal outside Buckingham Palace in 1977 with Syd Vicious pictured centre and former manager Malcom McLaren with hands in pocket

inely avuncular. Uncles Paul and Steve, with their craggy schoolboy looks, are dead-ringers for Robson and Jerome. Uncle Glen reminds one of Joe Bugner. The threat was potent - if you upset them, they might tickle you.

It was question time. Listings agents wanted to know would they be playing Belfast, Glasgow, Milton Keynes, Amster-

dam? They would, except for Holland which could "eff off". A French journalist asked if anarchy was returning to the UK? She was (rightly) ignored. What about Sid Vicious (deceased 1979), asked another. "His ashes were scattered at Heathrow, so we'd need a Hoover," replied Lydon. Why do it all over again? "Since we split up no-one has done bollocks all to change the

world." A bit harsh on Tony Blair, I thought. "Sting will you be playing Roxanne," called out one wag. Finally, what about his loyal fans? Did he have a message? He did. "I want you all to come to Finsbury Park. I hope it rains and your wheelchairs get stuck in the mud". I would, Johnny, but I've promised to take the kids to a puppet show.

## Parents seen as key to fighting illiteracy

JUDITH JUDD  
Education Editor

The way to end illiteracy among children is to end it among parents, says government-funded research published yesterday.

The study shows that family literacy programmes where parents work together are extremely successful in improving reading and writing.

Researchers from the National Foundation for Educational Research looked at four literacy programmes for parents at the bottom of the educational heap and their children, aged three to six. Most of the children had low scores in language and risked educational failure.

The 361 parents and 392 children attended courses of eight hours a week for 12 weeks. The study found the proportion of children who would have struggled with reading at school fell from two-thirds to just over a third. The proportion of children with the most severe reading difficulties fell from 24 per cent to 9 per cent. There were similar improvements in children's vocabulary.

Parents' average reading score went up by 5 per cent and their writing score by 10 per cent. The study found that all the progress children and parents made was still being maintained nine months later. Many parents went on to further studies and felt more confident about helping their children at home.

Greg Brooks, who led the research team, said of the programmes set up by the Basic Skills Agency: "This is one of the most effective initiatives we have ever encountered."

The pilot projects cost £3m paid by the Welsh Office and the Department for Education and Employment.

Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, would not commit the Government to more funding but she told a London conference: "We have to look at something that is as successful as this very seriously. If this is the way to break the cycle of deprivation and other problems it has to be taken very seriously."

Mrs Shephard responded vigorously to reports that plans to introduce nursery vouchers have run into trouble because not enough private providers are interested in the scheme, which starts in four local authorities in autumn. She said 600 private and voluntary groups had come forward, 387 of them in Norfolk and the rest in the three pilot authorities. Twenty two extra local authority nursery units are being set up in Norfolk.

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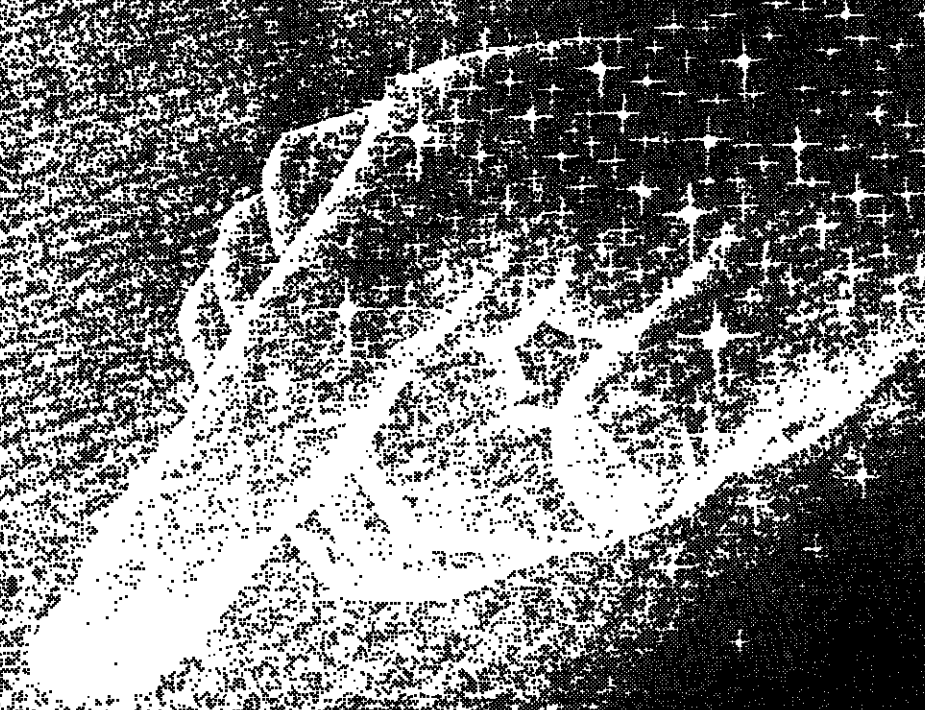
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# Harvey Nicks set for biggest sale ever – on Stock Exchange



Flagship: Harvey Nichols in Knightsbridge, nicknamed 'Harvey Nicks' by loyal customers

Photograph: John Voos

The smartly dressed "ladies who lunch" who shop at Harvey Nichols will soon be able to buy shares in the Knightsbridge store in London after the company announced plans to float on the stock market yesterday.

The flagship fashion emporium, which was acquired by a Hong Kong group five years ago, is set to raise up to £80m to fund ambitious expansion plans. These include opening regional branches in locations such as Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh in addition to the Leeds branch which is set to open this autumn. International expansion is also expected with branches in New York, Paris and Tokyo.

The expansion into the provinces follows similar moves recently announced by Selfridges, a rival department store. A Manchester Selfridges is set to open in 1998 in addition to smaller outlets in airports.

Harvey Nichols, affectionately known as "Harvey Nicks" to its well-heeled clientele, also plans to expand its restaurant interests following the successful opening of a chic bar and brasserie on the fifth floor of the

A local favourite prepares to leap into the world market, writes Nigel Cope

Knightsbridge shop. It is due to open a restaurant on the top floor of the Oxo tower near London's Festival Hall this summer. With glass walls and spectacular views over London, the restaurant is tipped as the capital's next trendy gastro-trend following in the footsteps of Quaglino's and Mezzos.

However, Clive Vaughan of retail consultants Verdict Research said: "I don't think they are raising this money to open restaurants and there aren't many locations in Britain that could support a branch of Harvey Nicks. My guess is that they will expand the Harvey Nichols brand internationally."

The store has performed well since it was acquired in 1991 by Hong Kong retail magnate Dickson Poon for £60m. When he bought Harvey Nichols from the Burton group it was losing £150,000 on sales of £34m. Since then the store has closed some departments, such as carpeting, and concentrated on fashion concessions, specialising

in top designer names such as Ralph Lauren, Donna Karan and Giorgio Armani.

The store has a string of celebrity shoppers, including the Princess of Wales. Actress Joanna Lumley and Jennifer Saunders have also used the store for shopping binges in episodes of the television comedy *Absolutely Fabulous*.

Harvey Nichols was founded in 1813 but did not move to its present location at the Knightsbridge end of Sloane Street until the 1880s. It was acquired by Debenhams in 1919 then became part of the fast-expanding Burton Group, when Sir Ralph Halpern's company bought Debenhams in 1985, and it passed to Dickson Poon five years later.

Mr Poon, who was educated at Uppingham, started out with a £185m (£424,000) loan from his father. He has since snapped up the rights to up-market Western brands such as Hermès and Charles Jourdan. His company Dickson Concepts also in-

cludes ST Dupont, the French lighter and pens company. Mr Poon added to his high profile a few years ago, and raised some eyebrows, when he hired six topless dancers to entertain guests at his company's 10th anniversary party.

Under the terms of the flotation, Mr Poon is selling just under half his stake in Harvey Nichols. The company has not yet set a date for its stock market listing but the float should value the company at around £160m. Its proximity to Harrods meant that Harvey Nichols has often been overshadowed by its more famous competitor, but the store has nevertheless developed a loyal following, among its credit-card wielding power-dressed clientele, for its high-quality goods and personal service.

Harvey Nichols is not the only department store to have enjoyed mixed fortunes in recent years. While the John Lewis Partnership and Selfridges have powered ahead others such as House of Fraser have struggled as the battle at the top end of the retail market becomes increasingly competitive.

## 'Dearth of evidence' at Rose West trial

WILL BENNETT

There was no direct evidence to link Rosemary West with the 10 murders she had been convicted of, the Court of Appeal was told yesterday. Her counsel also accused the media of having "a malign influence" on her trial in November.

She had suffered both from the decision of the trial judge, Mr Justice Mantell, to admit key evidence "regarded" by the defence as inadmissible and from his failure to put her side of the case adequately when he summed up, said Richard Ferguson, QC.

West, 42, is seeking leave to appeal against her conviction on 10 charges of murder by a jury at Winchester Crown Court. But Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, and two other judges, are effectively hearing her

step-daughter, and Shirley Robinson, a lodger at 25 Cromwell Street, was "temerous."

Evidence connecting her to the seven victims of sex killings found at Cromwell Street, "was virtually non-existent unless the evidence advanced under the banner of similar fact evidence was properly admissible."

Similar fact evidence was given by women who survived sexual assaults in which Rosemary West took part with her husband. The prosecution argued this showed that she was also involved in the attacks on the victims who died, but the defence said it was inadmissible.

Mr Ferguson said yesterday it was not known how the victims died because such a long time had elapsed since their deaths. Rosemary West had never admitted being involved, and there was evidence that Frederick West had carried out two murders and other attacks on his own.

The remains of Ann McFall, who disappeared before Frederick West met Rosemary, were found dismembered and bound with cord. Mr Ferguson said this showed that Rosemary West had not been involved in killing the seven Cromwell Street victims discovered in similar circumstances.

He said the possibility that Frederick West was solely responsible for the murders "is the hook upon which the defence hang their objection to the similar fact evidence."

Mr Ferguson continued: "The media both before and during the hearing of the case, exercised a malign influence on the proceedings such as to deprive the applicant of a fair trial."

He produced newspaper cuttings which he said were "sensational and prejudicial" and added that every major witness had a contract with the media which led to the danger of evidence being exaggerated or rehearsed with journalists.

Mr Ferguson said that another reason for the appeal was the defence's belief that the charges relating to Heather West, Charmaine West and Shirley Robinson should have been dealt with separately.

He also criticised the summing-up of Mr Justice Mantell for not giving adequate directions to the jury on how to apply similar fact evidence and failing to put the defence case fully.

The hearing continues today.



Rosemary West: Media were 'sensational and prejudicial'

appeal case in full.

The widow of the self-confessed serial killer, Frederick West, who was found hanged in his prison cell, denies any part in the murders of 10 girls and young women. Their remains were found at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, the couple's house, and at their previous home in the city.

West is in jail at Durham and is not attending the hearing in London.

Mr Ferguson told the court yesterday: "Other than the sheer horror of the discovery of the remains of the victims, the most striking feature of this case, say the defence, was the dearth of evidence to connect the applicant to these crimes."

He said the evidence linking Rosemary West to the deaths of Heather West, her daughter, Charmaine West, her husband's



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news

# Record heroin haul as gangs try to flood UK

JASON BENNETT  
Crime Correspondent

Britain is on the verge of a heroin epidemic with seizures of the drug up 80 per cent to a record total last year, it was revealed yesterday.

Investigators believe drug traffickers are trying to flood the United Kingdom with heroin in an attempt to create a bigger more profitable market.

Customs officers and the police also announced yesterday that in 1995 they recovered the biggest ever quantity of drugs in a single year. A record 55.6 tonnes of drugs were seized –

about £458m worth – up 9 per cent on 1994.

There has also been a resurgence in the popularity of the dance drug ecstasy. In 1995, the amount seized rose by about 17 per cent to the equivalent of 2 million tablets, worth about £30m at street prices.

But it is the huge increase in seizures of heroin – 1,118 kilograms, or enough for 658 million injections – that is causing the greatest single concern.

Dick Kellaway, Customs & Excise chief investigator, warned: "All the evidence – Customs seizures, police seizures and reports from those close to

the users – points to a massive increase in the volume of heroin being targeted on the UK. We believe that the increase is supply-led in the sense that heroin is being imported in order to create a market. Potentially this is the most serious drug problem that all of us face."

Heroin is now the most common class A drug. Most of it comes from opium grown in Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and arrives via countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary.

Most of the trafficking gangs in the UK are Turkish, Asian

and Afghan. About 20 Turkish gangs are running the bulk of the multi-million pound heroin trade with their main stronghold in north London. The drug is usually sold on to white drug gangs and dealers for distribution in the big cities.

A wrap of heroin costs between £10 and £15, and police believe an increasing number of young people are choosing it as their first choice drug. The trend was highlighted in the current hit film *Trainspotting*.

Customs says there is no sign of the overall upward trend abating. Police have also warned of a drug-gang culture

similar to the United States developing unless action is taken.

Keith Hellawell, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire and Chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' drugs sub-committee, also highlighted the growing threat to the young. He said the death of 18-year-old ecstasy victim Leah Betts had brought home the extent of the problem.

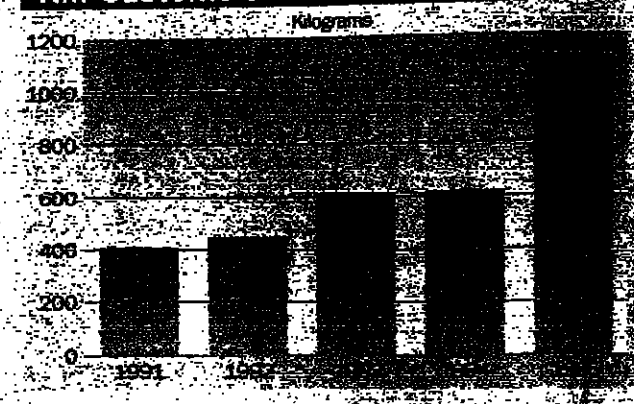
While seizures of ecstasy rose to 544kg, those for amphetamine dropped from about a quarter to 527kg and for LSD by more than a half to 31,000 doses. The rise in ecstasy is partly blamed on the growth of im-

ported, drugs from Holland, Belgium and France.

Surprisingly the amount of cocaine seized is down by more than half on last year to 940kg – about £110m at street prices. However, Customs and Excise believe the trend is still going up and the drop is a statistical blip resulting from three unusually large seizures in 1994.

Cannabis still makes up the bulk of drugs seized – more than 80 per cent of the total. For the first time, the figures include drug seizures at the Channel tunnel. In 1995, there were 12 major seizures with a total street value of £8m.

HM Customs & Excise Heroin seizures



## 'Vet's 100 dogs lived in filth as wild pack'

A vet kept 100 dogs in such appalling conditions at her home that some had no eyes and others had stumps for legs, a court was told yesterday.

Three inches of filth was caked on the floors at Helen Hein's cottage near Guildford, Surrey, and in-breeding among the dogs had led to hideous deformities, it was claimed. Dr Hein, 69, is charged by the RSPCA with causing unnecessary suffering to the dogs.

Farnham magistrates were told at the start of a five-day trial that Dr Hein bred German shepherds in filthy conditions. Many ran wild and formed packs. They were diseased and deformed. The vet, who denies a total of 19 charges of causing unnecessary suffering to the animals, was a former research

and filth and was over-run by dogs which had gone wild.

He said: "Her belief that the dogs should neither be castrated or spayed led to an ever-increasing population of these animals. At the time, they were living in deplorable conditions, wholly unsuitable, insanitary, squalid, deep in excrement and urine and other residue."

"The fact that the defendant is a qualified vet only makes the matter worse because it's clear she ought to have known better. I have little doubt she is extremely fond of them, perhaps even obsessed by them. The dogs have become part of her life."

Dr Hein listened intently as the allegations were read out. Mr Kurtz said the dogs had split into packs like wild animals and one pack had taken control of the staircase as their territory. He said that on one visit by the RSPCA it seemed as if one of the sickest dogs had been hidden in a caravan lavatory. "It was in a space 2ft square without ventilation or water. Zinta [the dog] had a large pressure sore at the end of a stump of a leg," Mr Kurtz said.

The court was told how one of the dogs called Cuddy could not use its back legs and had to drag itself around the room.

RSPCA inspector Alison MacVicar described how on several visits she had been stunned at the condition of the animals. "The whole situation was appalling. The dogs were covered in mud and faeces and several newborn litters were on the premises."

"I visited on 2 March, 1995, to make a full inventory. In a back bedroom, I was absolutely appalled. There were three inches of solid faeces on the floor which if you walked on it did not leave a footprint."

"There was no water and the only food I saw was scattered on the floors. In the kitchen there were between 10 and 15 dogs including puppies. Three dogs were of particular concern, one puppy had a bite wound to its face. This was a fresh bite. It had lost its left eye." Miss MacVicar said she also inspected several outdoor kennels and found similar horrific scenes.

The trial continues.



Dr Hein: RSPCA said dogs in 'appalling conditions'

veterinary surgeon employed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

She illegally bred dogs for sale at her secluded cottage at Newlands Corner because she was not a licensed breeder.

The charges were brought after RSPCA inspectors visited her home more than half a dozen times in October and November 1994 and March 1995.

Alan Kurtz, for the prosecution, warned magistrates that the evidence they would hear would be very distressing. Inspectors found dogs with missing eyes, sores and cuts and one animal hobbling around with a stump for a back leg. The court was told how every room in the house was covered in excrement

## Supermodels show the timeless grace of a legendary name



Classic glamour: Claudia Schiffer models a tweed suit with reflective lining turned out at collar and sleeves by Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel (left) and (right) Stella Tennant wears a brocade evening dress, also by Lagerfeld for Chanel, in Paris yesterday Photographs: AFP/Sheridan Morley

## Naval officer stole to fund betting

A high-flying officer who fiddled £21,000 from Royal Navy coffers to help fund his gambling addiction was jailed for four months by a court martial yesterday.

Graham Woodworth, 38, a former navy commander, was also dismissed from the service after he falsely claimed for boarding school allowances for his three children.

The court at HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, was told that the officer, who served on the aircraft carrier HMS *Ark Royal* and at the Ministry of Defence Institute in London, became addicted to betting on horses during a student summer in a bookmaker's.

Lt Cdr John Flanagan, for the prosecution, said that Woodworth, from Portsmouth, had misappropriated £12,462 in boarding school allowances paid to him to help fund the education of his children, Stuart, Dale and Angela.

Lt Cdr Flanagan said Woodworth had also stolen £2,655.12 paid as a lodging allowance. He was supposed to be living at a house in Muswell Hill, north London, while working at the Institute of Naval Oceanography and Meteorology, but was instead commuting from his Portsmouth home.

Investigators were alerted when Woodworth failed to show up for work one day. They went to the address in Muswell Hill but found Woodworth had not lived there for some time, and when they interviewed him about the matter they found discrepancies with his allowances.

Woodworth also falsified receipts from boarding schools in Ardingly, Sussex and Bembridge, Isle of Wight, where his three children were being educated, to claim advance payment of school fees totalling £5,970.

Woodworth pleaded guilty to one charge of theft, four charges brought under the Naval Discipline Act of misapplying school allowances, two charges of false reimbursement advice for the two schools and an eighth count of allowing a lodger to stay in his Portsmouth naval married quarters without official permission.

For the defence, Mr Bradley Albury said Woodworth's gambling problems stemmed from his family, who were left homeless 35 years ago because of his father's betting addiction.

"It was like a drug addiction, and looking back over the last five or six years he is now aware how serious a problem he had. He started as a social gambler and it became a compulsion," said Mr Albury.

Although his client was attending Gamblers Anonymous, Mr Albury said of the problem: "It is like a drink problem – he fears could come back to haunt him and he accepts he still has a problem."

Mr Albury said Woodworth was described by colleagues and fellow officers as a "high-flier who had the naval world at his feet". But he had allowed his career to be blighted by his gambling addiction.

President of the court martial, Captain Simon Goodall, told him: "There's no disguising the fact that you are the architect of your own downfall. You have woven a web of deceit which has entangled your entire family and other unsuspecting people."

"The root cause has been your addiction to gambling but this does not alter the stark fact that you have been dishonest. The service relies on honesty and trust and you have abused that trust."

Woodworth was also ordered to have his pay stopped until he had repaid £2,655 and to suffer the financial penalties from his dismissal. They include his £43,000-a-year salary, his married quarters in Portsmouth and a £100,000 pension lump sum.

## Woman golf champion 'treated differently' over club punch-up

A women's golf champion, sacked after punching a fellow club member off his bar stool, yesterday claimed she would have been treated differently if she were a man. Philomena Vaughan, 42, denied exaggerating the incident, which later earned her the nicknames "Mohammed Ali" and "Rocky".

Cross-examined at a resumed industrial tribunal, Mrs Vaughan, a three times club champion, insisted that during a trophy presentation night at the Dew-stow golf club, Gwent, businessman John Price, 49, slid his hand under her waistcoat and rubbed his hand up and down her thigh.

When she told him to stop,

Mr Price said something and then flicked his hand towards her face. "I put my hand up to fend him off and then hit him on the side of his face."

At an earlier hearing, the Cardiff tribunal was told Mrs Vaughan was first suspended and then sacked two months later as manager of the golf shop for gross misconduct following a row with the club's owner and chairman, Elwyn Harris, over his handling of the issue.

Mrs Vaughan of Rogiet, Gwent, claims unfair dismissal and also sex discrimination because Mr Price was not treated in the same way after the incident. "What upset me most was that the golf club didn't inter-

view me that night to find out what happened. . . Obviously, they didn't believe me at the time."

Former club barmaid Sonya Harris (no relation to Mr Harris), 24, described hearing Mr Price point out to Mrs Vaughan that she had something on her dress. "I then saw Mr Price lean forward and put his hand on her left thigh. Mrs Vaughan said something like 'Don't touch me', then I remember Mr Price waved his hand in front of her as if he was dismissing her allegation."

Mrs Vaughan had reacted by twice poking him in the shoulder area. "To me it looked like he lost his balance and went

back off the stool and fell on the floor," Miss Harris said.

Questioned by Philip Marshall, for the club, Mrs Vaughan denied she had a lot to drink at the evening. "Everything happened as I said," she added. She strongly denied allegations that she called the club committee "sods".

Mrs Vaughan, whose case is backed by the Equal Opportunities Commission, has told the tribunal how she refused to sign a letter from Mr Price agreeing that there had been no assault. In his evidence Mr Price, of Caldicot, Gwent, denied ever raising his hand to Mrs Vaughan or touching her.

The case continues.

## McFlights take burgers on to a different plane

ROS WYNNE-JONES

"This is your captain speaking on the McPlane flight from Zurich to Palma. Big Macs and milkshakes will now be served."

Not content with providing burger bars across the world's holiday destinations, McDonald's will shortly take to the sky in a big red aeroplane.

The aircraft, dubbed McPlane in Britain and the Flying Ketchup in Switzerland, where the idea was conceived, makes its maiden voyage on 1 April. But the bright red 161-seat aircraft, with McDonald's emblazoned across the fuselage and a trademark yellow "M" on the tail, is an earnest attempt by the

fast food giant to make "flights fun for families" and to trail-blaze the company's name across the heavens.

The joint venture between McDonald's Switzerland, charter company Crossair and Hotelplan, the Swiss tour operators, will feature a McDonnell Douglas MD-81 aircraft customised to create an "ambience close to that of a McDonald's restaurant", but with red leather seats for comfort.

However, a large fries will be out of the question at the Flying McDonald's. The company is anxious to avoid a chip-pan fire at 30,000ft and counter service will be replaced by conventional meals on a plate.

Crossair, a subsidiary of Switzerland's national airline, Swissair, usually specialises in upmarket charter flights for business clients, with flight attendants serving champagne rather than Chicken McNuggets. A spokeswoman said: "It is moving downmarket for us, in a way, but we were glad to be doing something different, with families in mind."

"Children get very bored and we would be offering them souvenirs, a certificate and toys, as well as a McDonald's-style meal."

Children will be able to visit the cockpit, under supervision, with a range of holiday souvenirs on sale to complete the outing.

## Numbers up as BT rings in a new service for the home

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Correspondent

BT is testing a service which could assign up to 16 telephone numbers to a single incoming line, making the phone ring differently depending on which one is being called.

The system, now on trial in Glasgow, would let several people in the same house each have

an "assigned" ringing tone – for example the normal two short rings or two long rings. They would then know precisely who the phone was ringing for.

BT has had the system on trial since last July among a few hundred subscribers. The company says that its introduction nationwide is "a matter of when rather than if".

The move is part of an effort

to fight back against cable companies, which are using their own recently installed digital TV and telephone networks to offer a wide range of services.

Cambridge Cable, which owns four franchises covering a total of 500,000 homes, has been offering the same "multiple ring" service – Identical – since December at £6 per quarter per extra number

assigned to the line. Other cable companies are also planning to introduce the service.

The system uses a facility available through digital telephone exchanges by which a particular phone number does not have to be connected to an actual line. Alternatively, many numbers can be assigned to a single line, with a particular ringing pattern, controlled by the ex-

change nearest to the phone.

It could be used by somebody working at home who wanted to distinguish between incoming business and personal calls (which would be listed under different numbers in a phone-book) or by families who might want to offer teenagers a separate phone number.

Outgoing calls would still be charged to a single bill, but

itemised billing would make it possible to identify who made which calls.

"While the technical limit is 16 lines per phone, it gets increasingly difficult to distinguish who is being called as you add more," said a BT spokesman yesterday. "It's easiest with two, and then it gets progressively more complex. The problem is that the

exchange can vary the length of individual rings, but not their pitch."

Multiple-number facilities have been available for some years in the US, where digital exchanges have been in use for longer.

BT only converted its national network from older, analogue systems in the middle of last year.



# Spotters await the comet of the century

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Correspondent

Thousands of amateur astronomers are preparing their binoculars to watch what could be the brightest comet so far this century. Comet Hyakutake, discovered in January by a Japanese amateur, will be at its brightest by the end of this week, when it should be visible all night as a large, fuzzy patch a little smaller than the Moon. Besides being exceptionally bright for a comet, it will also pass very close – in cosmic terms – to the Earth. On Saturday it will be just 10 million miles away, having travelled hundreds of millions of miles through space on an elliptical orbit around the Sun that has probably taken centuries. It will then pass 20 million miles from the Sun before disappearing below the plane of the Solar System.

Although some comets have proved disappointingly dim after predictions that they would

light up the sky, experts are hopeful this will be different.

"It looks as though this is going to be very bright," said the noted astronomer Patrick Moore yesterday. "I don't think that it will be as big as the full moon, but part of that is because it is still approaching us. It will look more like a conventional comet – with a tail streaming behind it – next month, when it is moving away from us."

Comets are frozen bodies of gas, liquid and rocks a few miles across whose "tails" are created by streams vapourising as the Sun heats them up. The tail always points away from the Sun.

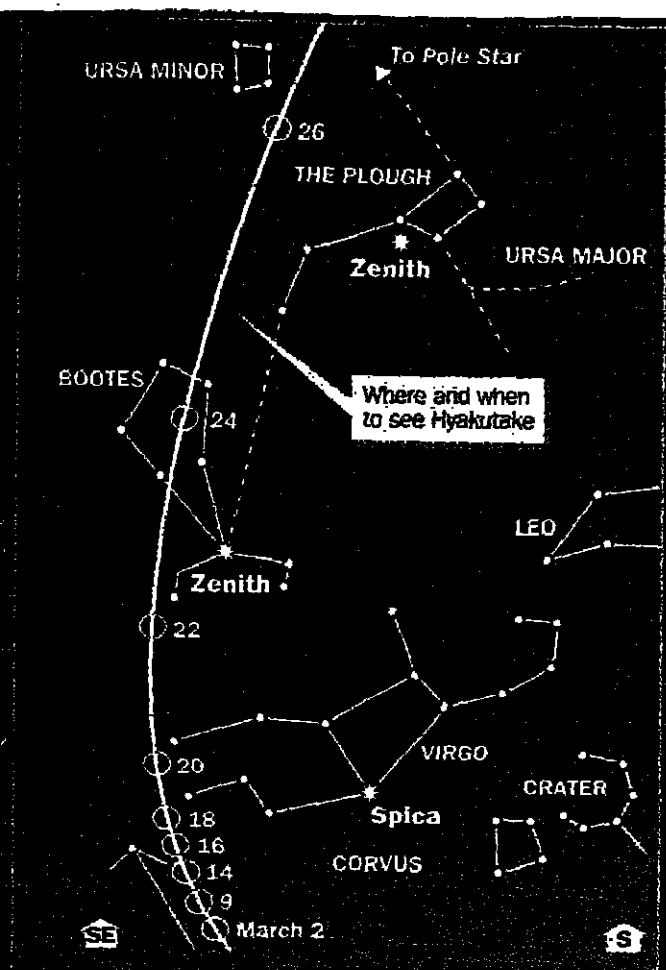
The comet is currently most visible in the early hours of the morning, after about 3am. It is best viewed using binoculars.

"Telescopes don't have a wide enough field of view," said Mr Moore. But as the week progresses it will become brighter and more visible throughout more of the night as it moves towards the sky's North Pole.

Anyone wanting to see it should find a spot away from city lights and allow their eyes to adjust to the lower brightness of the stars. It should be possible to spot the comet using the star chart (see graphic).

Hyakutake is now expected to be the brightest comet for at least 20 years, and possibly since the turn of the century. It was discovered in January by Yuji Hyakutake, an amateur astronomer using a powerful pair of 6in binoculars. At that time it showed up only as a faint smudge of light against the background of stars, but will now probably remain visible until May.

But even before Hyakutake has come fully into view, astronomers are preparing for the arrival next year of Comet Hale-Bopp, which will make its closest approach to the Sun on 1 April. It could eventually be brighter than Hyakutake, according to experts who spotted it beyond Jupiter's orbit last summer.



## Comet Hyakutake's shining path

The comet's path is shown in the graphic, starting from the bottom left and moving towards the top right. The path is marked with numbers 1 through 26, indicating the sequence of observations. The comet is expected to be visible from March 2 onwards.

## Stress 'hits 40 per cent of police officers'

LIZ HUNT  
Health Editor

Nearly a quarter of police officers suffer severe psychological distress as a result of their day-to-day policing activities, according to a new study.

Overall 40 per cent of the force studied showed "significant" psychological distress, and reported a much higher level of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder than the general population.

Symptoms included: flashbacks to incidents, nightmares, inability to sleep or enjoy normal activities, and an over-reliance on alcohol and drugs. Women reported almost twice as many symptoms as men.

Officers with the longest service suffered the highest levels of distress, according to Jennifer Mitchell-Gibbs, an inspector in the Essex force, who with Dr Stuart Mitchell, a clinical psychologist at Harlepool General Hospital, surveyed 1,000 constables and sergeants from a force in south-east England.

"This is contrary to expectations. Officers don't become immune to traumatic events over time... the effect of stress is cumulative; a drip-drip effect and then it may be just one fatal accident too many that is the crunch," she said.

Death, major disasters, and incidents resulting in injury to themselves or colleagues, were the most common problems. However, attendance at a sudden death, a very common policing duty, was described as "very distressing", particularly for those contacting the relatives of the dead person. Some 23 per cent of officers displayed severe psychological distress.

The survey found there was a heavy emphasis on suppressing emotions, but this prevented officers from asking for help.

"It is part of the police culture to project strength, authority, resilience – the 'John Wayne syndrome'," Ms Mitchell-Gibbs told the first European Conference On Traumatic Stress In Emergency Services, Peace Keeping Operations and Humanitarian Aid Organisations in Sheffield yesterday.

The British force has adopted US practices of relying on critical incident debriefing and peer group counselling for officers in need of help. But officers in the survey said they wanted external help because they mistrusted their colleagues.

Ms Mitchell-Gibbs said that previous studies suggested that the British force was less vulnerable to stress generated by their daily duties, but found bureaucracy, their workload and bad relationships with colleagues more stressful.

The study confounds this view, Ms Mitchell-Gibbs said, and exposes the toll general policing takes on a force.

Another study presented at the conference, which challenges accepted views, was that more than three-quarters of people with post-traumatic stress disorder have no previous history of psychiatric problems. However a significant number had suffered a major life experience – both good and bad – in the 12 months prior to the trauma which triggered PTSD.

The study of mental health patients in Nottingham revealed that the most common traumas included road accidents and assaults, and bad birth experiences for women.

## DAILY POEM

### Magnetism

By Miroslav Holub

When the Queen, over the magnetic lines of force on Faraday's rough table, asked And what use is it? Faraday replied, gazing lower than her lace collar:

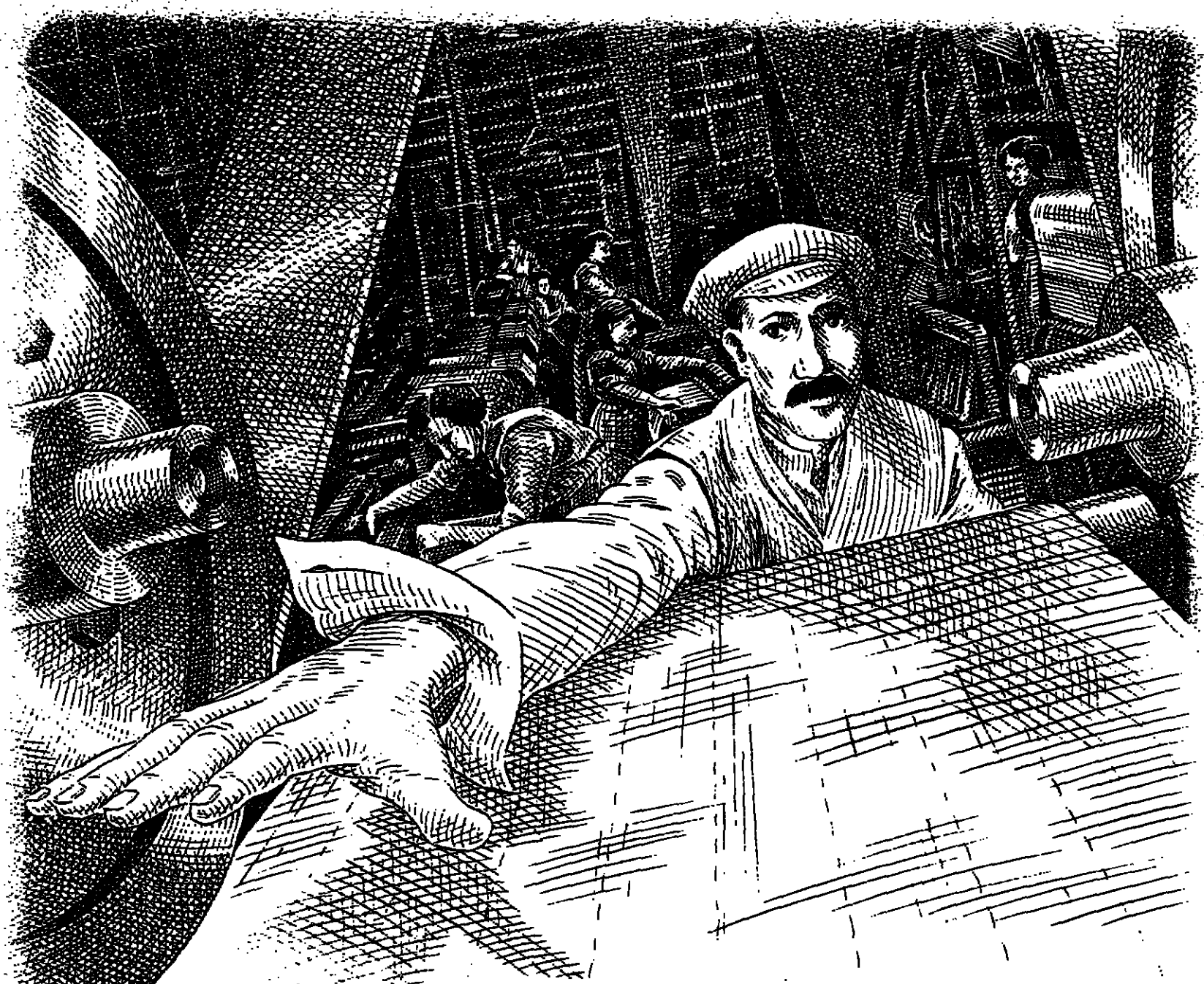
And what use, Ma'am, is a child?

It was a high point of science in history, because

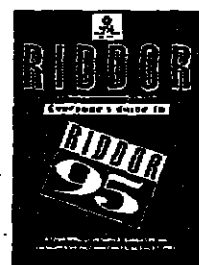
modern mankind is divided into those who understand gravitation and those who understand braces.

we either ask about everything, or we ask about nothing, in which case the universe originated in the Square of the Republic through the condensation of Saint Nicholas's deodorant.

This week is National Science Week, the third of its kind, led by the British Association for the Advancement of Science and designed to increase public understanding and interest in science. This poem is taken from a new collection, *Supposed to Fly* (Bloodaxe, £3.95), by Miroslav Holub. Holub is a rare creature: a leading Czech scientist and her most important poet, whose preoccupations – the pitching of scientific rationale against the central mystery of human existence – pitch and bob around his verse. "He is," wrote Ted Hughes, "one of the half-dozen most important poets writing anywhere."



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international

# Confident Taiwan rolls out its tanks

TERESA POOLE  
Hsinchu

Sixty miles south of Taipei, the 51st Tank Brigade was ready and waiting. But Lieutenant-General Kao An-guo, the deputy commander of Taiwan's Northern Field Army, was not letting on if he was concerned.

"I do not think the Chinese Communists have the ability to cross the Taiwan Strait," he said yesterday, as 40 tanks and armoured troop carriers put on a demonstration of what would await them if they did.

The training and attack base, in the suburbs of Hsinchu city, is home to 1,700 troops, one of many bases on Taiwan. If the general was to be believed, the brigade had stayed on level 5, the lowest in terms of alert. "We do not feel tense," he said.

Yesterday, as blustery rain and fog shrouded Taiwan and the strait, the battle was mostly about propaganda. As the tank brigade was put through its paces for the world's television cameras, Taiwan's message was confident. "We are ready to repulse any invading force coming from outside the island," said General Kao.

On the mainland side of the Taiwan Strait, China's latest military exercises appeared to have been delayed by bad weather. But preparations for a show of force were under way.

On the island of Pingtan, off China's south-east coast, radio broadcasts ordered residents of nearby islets to evacuate to the mainland before 4pm. Civilians on coastal areas were also told to move, and fishermen to stay in port.

People's Liberation Army (PLA) tanks and troop-carrying vehicles were reported to be patrolling the streets of Pingtan. "There are tanks, troop carriers and other military vehicles all over. The army has taken

charge of local traffic," a local official reported.

The new exercises, which were due to start yesterday and continue until after Taiwan's presidential election on Saturday, are expected to include well-publicised amphibious landings on Pingtan. It will be an unmistakable message to Taiwanese voters. Last November, large-scale beach landings were included in mainland exercises and then shown at length on state television for Taiwan's benefit. This week's army, navy and air force manoeuvres are expected to be larger than ever, over an area stretching to the middle of the Taiwan Strait.

In Hong Kong, the Peking-controlled *Wen Wei Po* newspaper quoted a PLA leader as saying China might need to widen the latest exercises.

"The scale of strategic exercises currently and in the future may have to be enlarged," said the deputy commander of Shenyang military district, Shi Baoyuan.

Although few analysts believe the PLA will attempt to seize any of Taiwan's territory this week, residents of small islands closest to the test zone have decided not to wait around. Large numbers of soldiers are on alert, and the towns have almost shut down.

On Wuchiu, 11 miles south of the zone, only 16 of the 82 residents remain, and they are under curfew. The 200 islanders still on the Chu islands, 11 miles north of the zone, practised air-raid drills yesterday. About 300 islanders decided to flee on Sunday, although the government has no official policy concerning evacuation.

Fishing boats, which would normally work these waters, were warned repeatedly to stay clear of the region and were turned back to Taiwan's northern port of Keelung.



Fighting talk: Taiwanese soldiers carrying a shell during exercises near the northern town of Hukou

Photograph: Booby Yip/Reuters

Tension in the region will escalate this week after the arrival of the US aircraft-carrier *Nimitz*, and the decision on whether it should pass through the Taiwan Strait. At the weekend, China's Prime Minister, Li Peng, warned it not to. He

said any show of force in the strait would "merely complicate matters". In Hsinchu, General Kao was reticent about the US aircraft-carrier. "I wish the American soldiers... Oh, no... I can't tell you in detail," he smiled. Yesterday's tank

demonstration had been organised at short notice, following the mainland's slick television portrayal of missile tests near Taiwan earlier this month. Unlike China, where news of the PLA's exercises has been orchestrated by official

propaganda organs, Taiwan's publicity exercise was low-key, although Taiwanese journalists were banned. Had General Kao heard anything about mainland manoeuvres that day? "I have no time to read the newspapers today," he

laughed. As tanks emerged from the fog on to the battle training-ground, the commentary said: "With psychological warfare, the enemy will be easier to be destroyed." But the most effective weapon yesterday appeared to be the weather.

IN BRIEF

## Car bomb kills six in Algerian city

Algiers — A car bomb exploded yesterday outside the police headquarters in the north-eastern city of Tizi-Ouzou, killing at least six people and injuring 25 others, hospital sources reported. Twenty of the injured were said to be in a serious condition.

First reports indicated the bomb went off in a car parked near the main police station, not far from the railway terminal. Local officials blamed the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Algeria's most violent militant organisation. AP

## Russian offensive

Moscow — Russian troops stormed into a village in western Chechnya to mop up pockets of resistance by separatist rebels, Russian news agencies said. The assault on the village of Samashki, about 20 miles west of the Chechen capital, Grozny, followed heavy Russian losses. A Russian official said that 11 servicemen were killed in an ambush. Reuters

## Tramp burned alive

Paris — Youths killed a homeless man by setting him on fire in a street near the Eurostar terminal at the Gare du Nord, police said. The victim, aged about 30, was apparently doused with methylated spirits. Witnesses reported seeing three or four youths running away from the scene. Reuters

## Camp crackdown

Tunis — Five Central African leaders launched a new crackdown on intimidation in camps for Rwandan refugees, in an effort to persuade them it is safe to return home. Former US president Jimmy Carter announced the measures, closing three days of talks. "The uncertain thing is convincing the refugees that it's safe and advantageous to return," he said. AP

## Tamil Tiger attack

Colombo — Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger guerrillas killed 18 soldiers in a landmine attack in the northern Jaffna peninsula, in the first big rebel attack in several weeks. Reuters

## Democracy blues

Harare — Fewer than half of Zimbabwe's 4.9 million voters cast ballots in the presidential election at the weekend, seen as a mere formality after a boycott by challengers to President Robert Mugabe. Interim figures showed about 31.4 per cent of registered voters turned out. Reuters

## Nobel poet dies

Athens — Odysseus Elytis, 85, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1979, died at his home in central Athens yesterday. Radio stations broke into programmes to announce his death and many started non-stop broadcasts of his poems, which became hugely popular when set to music. Reuters

## Flying high

Zhukovskiy, Russia — The Tupolev company has unveiled a prototype update of its Tu-144 "Concorde" airliner, which it hopes US money will turn into the supersonic passenger aircraft of the 21st century. The Tu-144L retains the drop-nosed, delta-wing look of the 28-year-old Soviet rival to Concorde but is fitted with more powerful engines, developed for nuclear bombers. Reuters

## Trees stripped bear

Sydney — Animal rights activists are fighting a plan by South Australia's National Parks and Wildlife Service to kill or remove 2,000 koalas on an island near Adelaide to halt a potentially disastrous population explosion. A state government spokesman said the present population of 5,000 animals was quickly stripping the island's eucalyptus trees of leaves — the creatures' main diet. AP

# Riots rack Indonesian province

LEWA PARDOMUAN  
Reuters

Jakarta — Several hundred youths rioted in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya yesterday, setting fire to cars and a market and damaging buildings in a second week of violence.

Riots hit the town of Abepura when the body of Thomas Wapai Wainggai, who died last week while serving a prison sentence in Jakarta, arrived in the provincial capital, Jayapura, for burial. "They burned cars and a market and damaged buildings," a spokesman said.

Residents said Jayapura, 2,000 miles east of Jakarta, was sealed off by the military. Offices were shut and frightened residents stayed indoors.

The riots broke out in Abepura after protesters were stopped from heading to Jayapura, 12 miles away. Residents and the army said last night that calm had returned but soldiers continued to patrol.

"Tension has reduced but the military is still keeping a watchful eye. There have been

no reports of arrests or casualties," an army officer said by telephone from Jayapura.

An official at the Jayapura general hospital said that there were some injuries but there no reports of deaths.

Residents said the riots, by 300-400 people, were linked to Wainggai, who was sentenced to 20 years in jail for proclaiming an independent Melanesian state in Irian during a flag-raising ceremony in 1987.

Seventy people, along with Wainggai, were tried for subversion and in 1988 were jailed for between six and 20 years. Wainggai, a US-trained anthropologist said to have died of heart problems on the way to

a hospital from Cipinang prison, just outside Jakarta, was believed to be in his sixties.

His Japanese wife was sentenced to six years in jail and has since been released, but 21 others are still in detention.

Residents said the rioters, mostly students, wanted to take Wainggai's body to the university before it was taken to his family home. "He was a teacher at the university and they wanted to take him there before he was buried," one resident said.

Last week the Irian towns of Timika and Tembagapura, where Freeport Indonesia operates one of the world's largest copper and gold mines, were rocked by riots by disgruntled tribespeople frustrated at not benefiting from the development in Irian.

Diplomats said Wainggai was believed to have had close links with the separatist Free Papua Movement (OPM), which is fighting for an independent Irian Jaya. OPM rebels have been holding 11 hostages, including six Europeans, in the forbidding jungles of Irian since 8 January.

# Abortion clinic killer faces life in prison

JOHN CARLIN  
Washington

John Salvi, 24, was found guilty yesterday of murder after a Massachusetts jury turned down a defence claim that he was insane when he went on a shooting rampage at two Boston abortion clinics on 30 December 1994, killing two receptionists and wounding five others.

Salvi, who says he believes abortion is part of a worldwide conspiracy against the Roman Catholic Church, faces life in jail after convictions on two counts of first-degree murder and five counts of assault with intent to murder. There is no death penalty in Massachusetts.

Salvi's defence did not question the police version of the facts of the case, but contended that at the time of the killings he was prey to paranoid schizophrenia. Some of the evidence appeared to support the insanity plea. Witnesses testified that Salvi fired 10 bullets into

one of his victims, he cried: "This is what you get! You should pray the rosary!"

Before the trial started Salvi repeatedly disrupted hearings, insisting he be granted an opportunity to make a statement to the media about an anti-Catholic conspiracy in which, he said, the Freemasons and the Ku-Klux-Klan were involved.

The prosecution successfully argued, however, that Salvi had carried out the killings with clear premeditation and was fully alert to the fact that what he was doing was illegal and wrong. Witnesses said that he was seen practising at a shooting-range the day before his rampage.

Salvi's father said his son had been a normal healthy child, but late in his teens became strange and withdrawn, spending long hours closeted in his bedroom reading the Bible. Salvi's lawyers said his crime had been triggered by the murders of four Catholic priests in Algeria on 27 December 1994.

# Seoul bars British journalist who parodied president

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY  
Seoul

In an apparent toughening of its attitude towards the foreign media, South Korea has rejected a request by Jeremy Hanley, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, to reinstate a British journalist expelled after writing articles poking fun at President Kim Young Sam.

Earlier this month Mr Hanley asked Gong Ro Myung, the Foreign Minister, to reconsider the case of Bruce Cheesman, who works for the *Australian Financial Review*. On 26 February,

after nine years working in Seoul, his application for a new visa was rejected by the Justice Ministry.

Despite lobbying by diplomats, a government spokesman said the decision was "irrevocable" and Mr Cheesman would not be allowed to work again in South Korea.

No official reason has been given, but Soha Woo Hyun, director-general of the foreign media division of the Korean Overseas Information Service, said Mr Cheesman had violated immigration regulations by doing research while visiting the

country as a tourist, and had "repeatedly gone beyond the bounds of what we consider sound journalistic practice. He repeatedly made false and defamatory allegations about the government of Korea."

Mr Cheesman insisted his visits as a tourist were made years ago and that what really rattled Seoul was his personal criticism of President Kim and members of his family.

Chief among the government's complaints is the case of the presidential Buddha. Last year Koreans were shaken by a series of disasters, including

the collapse of a bridge and a store in Seoul in which more than 500 people were killed.

A Buddhist paper reported rumours that Mr Kim, a Christian, had ordered the removal of a Buddha statue from the garden of the presidential palace. This — the rumours went — had angered the heavens.

The President's men denied the Buddha had been moved. The *Financial Review's* jokey account, complete with cartoon, and citing inside sources, provoked fury. Mr Cheesman was hauled in for the latest in a series of official scoldings. Last

week the *Review* received papers from lawyers for the Korean government initiating defamation proceedings.

But more decisive, Mr Cheesman believes, was the book he has been working on: an unofficial biography of Mr Kim focusing on the most controversial rumours which billow around the charismatic President. He admitted he has no documentary evidence for the most serious allegations.

But, based on interviews with former and serving politicians and aides and officials, the book will make embarrassing al-

legations about the funding of Mr Kim's 1992 election campaign and about the avowedly Christian President's private life.

The past few months have been a critical period for President Kim: as well as the trials of his predecessors Roh Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan, on charges of corruption, mutiny and treason, his New Korea Party faces parliamentary elections in a month's time which could rob him of control of the National Assembly.

Mr Sohn said: "This present action is not aimed at the for-

eign press, with whom we enjoy excellent working relations. The action we have taken is a legitimate recourse of a kind acceptable in any civilised country." Until this year, no correspondent had been expelled for professional reasons since the days of military dictatorship in the 1980s.

"The screws have been tightening in the last couple of months," said Mr Cheesman. "It is anti everything that the new Korea is supposed to stand for, a Third World mentality of worrying what the foreign press says about it."

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# After Maastricht: The Inter-Governmental Conference, starting next week, must rebuild public confidence

## People's will turns against EU ideals

By SARAH HELM  
Brussels

The last few years have not been a happy time for the EU. Faith in the Union has evaporated across the continent. The thin black lines on the graphs of public opinion began to dip around 1990, and have zig-zagged steadily downwards. Today only half Europe's citizens think their country has benefited from EU membership.

This is a bad time for the EU, and it coincides with the moment when the 15 member states are set to rewrite the founding treaties, setting a new direction for the millennium.

A Europe's leaders gear up for the Inter-Governmental Conference, to be launched in Turin on 29 March, they are conscious of the crisis of public confidence in the EU is worse than ever. They talk constantly of getting "closer to the citizen" and of making Europe "relevant." But there is little reason to believe the IGC will win back support for integration. Rather, it is likely to confuse and alienate people further.

Only five years ago, John Major welcomed the results of the last IGC with a triumphant "Game, set and match." No one would claim to regard the Maastricht treaty with that degree of satisfaction today. Horst Teltschik, who helped negotiate Maastricht as an adviser to Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, admits Europe's political leaders were wrong not to seek greater public support for the treaty at the time. "We were too self-confident. We believed we had the support of the people," Mr Teltschik said. "I was a mistake. We should have explained what we were doing and why we were do-

### BUILDING EUROPE

ing it more than we did. The goals were important and it was important to explain them."

Opinion polls only hint at the depth of disillusion; there are many other indicators. There is a growing tendency to blame Brussels for economic ills and loss of cultural identity. The media in many member states run more and more anti-EU stories, both mythical and true, suggesting there is a public appetite for Euro-scepticism.

Ignorance about the way that Europe really works suggests there is apathy and confusion. Only 20 per cent of Europeans have heard of the forthcoming IGC on Europe, although it is billed as a historic watershed.

The British have always had their very British opinions on Europe. But for decades most continental citizens took the whole project for granted. Until the 1990s there was, as the "permissive consensus" con-



Happier days: John Major at the Maastricht summit in 1991. Five years on, public faith in Europe has plummeted

Photograph: Brian Harris

cerning Europe in most of the member states. The public accepted that integration, in general, was a good thing, and that it was being promoted to prevent war and produce economic benefits. People were largely content to leave the job of constructing Europe to the political elite without asking too many questions.

In the boom years of the late 1980s, general approval reached a peak. The prospect of the sin-

gle market raised high hopes, while the dynamism of Jacques Delors, the former commission president, helped to promote an impression of progress. The collapse of the Soviet Union added to a sense of long-term security.

The downturn in support began in 1990 and 1991, before the signing of the Maastricht treaty, which subsequently became the scapegoat for the collapse in public confidence. In retrospect, many in Brussels ascribe the new disillusion to growing fear about the effects of the single market, and suspicion that hopes had been falsely raised about its benefits. When the Maastricht debate gathered pace in 1992, Europeans were already in a sceptical mood. Recession, and growing unemployment, made things worse.

This scepticism deepened when they started to contemplate the new reform programme. Maastricht, more than previous European reforms, raised questions about the

principles of EU membership. The 1992 debate invited people to ask a fundamental question they may not have asked before: what is Europe for? The treaty failed to answer the question, serving only to confuse. As a blueprint for European union Maastricht was alienating and impenetrable. It was rejected in a Danish referendum and was almost rejected by the French.

Since 1992 the indicators suggest no return of public confidence in "Europe." Talk of seeking a new "European identity" has only served to focus minds on the lack of any such thing. Furthermore, Europe's attempts at harmonisation are blamed for destroying the identities of nations and regions.

The advocates of EU integration argue they are attempting to lessen the effects of "globalisation". But ordinary people see the EU as an instrument of that process. "People once felt they were members of a nation state. Now they feel that less and less,

but at the same time they don't feel like members of something called Europe," says Denis MacShane, a pro-European Labour MP.

After the Maastricht disappointment, it is not surprising that Europeans now recoil against the prospect of another round of abstract debate over their future. This IGC could run on into the second half of 1997. "It is asking a lot of people to follow all of this. We are seen to be in a state of permanent revolution," said a senior official in the European Commission. "People are tired of it. They just don't want to know. They seem to be saying: 'Just let us be left in peace'."

Setting their agenda for Turin, EU heads of government have shown they are aware of these concerns. More user-friendly concepts are being emphasised, such as greater "democracy" and "openness". Subsidiarity, the principle under which power ought to be exercised at supra-national level only where

it is absolutely necessary, is once again being emphasised. And the European Commission, the unelected bureaucracy, seen as the real bogey in the public mind, is threatened with loss of status and power in the IGC. There are also growing signs that leaders are frantically looking for ways to buy public acceptance for the new IGC programme, with vague promises of policies for jobs and social protection, a greater role for national parliaments and greater attention to local sensitivities.

So far the public has had little reason to believe the views of the "citizens" will be taken into account, and the omens do not look good. One of the most marked findings of recent opinion polls was that seven out of 10 Europeans believed the next IGC ought to be put to a referendum in their country. With a dramatic upswing in the public mood, the results of such referendums are unlikely to be positive.

## Britain outvoted on beef drug ban

KATHERINE BUTLER  
Brussels

EU ministers outvoted Britain yesterday and agreed to tighten a ban on the use of hormone drugs in meat production. Agriculture ministers decided not just to retain the eight-year-old ban on growth-promoting drugs and imports of hormone-treated meat but to introduce stricter controls, checks and penalties.

Britain, which opposed the original decision to ban hormones in 1989, stood alone in demanding that farmers should be free to use growth-promoting substances which pose no risk to human health. Tony Baldry, Agriculture Minister of State, urged colleagues to heed the findings of a panel of independent scientists which concluded last month that derivatives of five natural hormones were safe if used under prescribed conditions.

Britain also warned that tightening the hormone ban at this stage would sour the long dispute with the US, which permits hormones and whose beef exports are excluded by the EU ban.

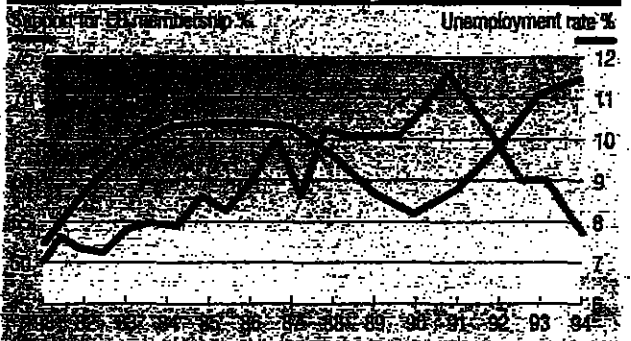
Washington has lodged a complaint with the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation and the sides are due to hold conciliation talks later this month. "This accord clearly will not help. It is inappropriate," said a senior British official.

US producers say that thanks to the ban they lose \$100m (£66m) a year in exports. But the overwhelming view of EU ministers yesterday was that relaxation at this stage would unleash a consumer backlash, triggering a potential beef-market collapse. The incidence of BSE or "mad-cow disease", particularly in Britain, has led to a big decline in consumption; legalising hormones would provoke a further drop of up to 30 per cent, according to European Commission studies.

The Irish Agriculture Minister, Ivan Yates, whose country's economy is more dependent on beef than any other EU member, reflected the general mood. "We are determined to resist US pressure to do anything which would undermine consumer confidence in red meat."

News analysis, page 13

### Euro-scepticism grows as joblessness rises



## Priest fights church homosexuality charge

Nicosia (Reuters) - A Greek Cypriot priest accused of homosexuality by his church will today answer its charges while a Nottingham-based priest has decided to sue the archbishop for libel for naming him in the affair.

Archimandrite Pangratios Meracis, 49, denies allegations of moral impropriety. The Not-

tingham priest described on the charge sheet as a homosexual is Iakovos Savva, who has let it be known through his lawyer that he intends to bring libel proceedings.

The threat of legal action against the church is the latest twist in an affair that sparked some of the worst rioting in years in Nicosia, when Mr Mer-

acis's supporters besieged the archbishopric before being dispersed by riot police.

"We believe the procedure [trial] against Meracis is a complete illegality. It was based on the testimony of incompetent witnesses and church rules were not followed," said his lawyer Eleftherios Eleftheriou, an MP and chairman of the

parliamentary legal affairs committee.

Two members of the Holy Synod have publicly agreed with lawyers who criticised the procedure against Mr Meracis, a taxi driver, as a violation of church rules. The two men who testified against him and a massage parlour owner, have since moved to Romania.

## Serbs stage burning exit from Sarajevo

By EMMA DALY  
Grbavica

The pop and crackle of burning bullets peppered the farewell speeches as the Bosnian Serb police in Sarajevo lowered their flag in a ceremony to mark their withdrawal from Grbavica, a front-line suburb reverting to government rule today.

As smoke drifted from houses burning in the background, two dozen policemen in royal blue camouflage lined up in front of headquarters, for speeches lamenting the Serbs' departure and promising their return some day. Officials kissed the red-white-and-blue flag, taken down to the strains of an old Serb anthem.

"We are leaving proudly," Milorad Katic, the Serb mayor, told his men. There was a huge explosion: the fire set in a house nearby by Serbs who are angry about their losses had finally reached the ammunition dumped there.

Similar bangs punctuated the afternoon in Grbavica yesterday, its desolate landscape of grim towerblocks wreathed in the smoke of fires set by gangs of enraged Serbs.

Police from the Muslim-Croat Federation are due to take control of the suburb at 6am today, marking the final reunification of Sarajevo under the Dayton peace plan.

The dispossessed are wreaking their revenge. Italian Nato troops in Grbavica have spent the past few days rescuing civilians from burning buildings, and arresting Serb men for arson and possession of explosives.

Unfortunately, the Italian commander is under orders to turn these miscreants over to the Bosnian Serb police. The arsonists are then released.

So it is that Nato tries to keep order in the last hours of the Serb presence in Sarajevo.

Liljana Bukic wept as she watched the flames roaring through the rafters of her building, despite the best efforts of her elderly neighbours who ran between their kitchens and balconies hurling water at the fire. They managed, without the help of the Sarajevo fire department, to extinguish the flames and save the building.

"We were planning to stay, but you see what is going on - Hitler did not do what these people are doing," Mrs Bukic said through tears. "It's like a child's game," she added.

She had heard that some men had started the fire in one of the flats, but she had not seen them. "I would have strangled them - they would not have had to go to The Hague [war crimes tribunal]," she said. "There were children in this building."

Mr Katic said: "This is what our people are doing because they are dissatisfied and because of the tragedy that has befallen them," he said. "I understand why. I have sympathy for them because they don't want anyone else to live in their house."

The Serbs who wish to stay are being driven out by propaganda from their own side. The UN believes only 8,000 to 10,000 Serbs - 10 to 12 per cent of the wartime population - have remained in the five Sarajevo suburbs changing hands.

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## Odysseus Elytis

*West of Sorrow* is the title of the final collection of poems by Odysseus Elytis, published in Greek at the end of last year. The seven poems of the collection were apparently written as recently as last summer, the poet's 84th, spent at Porio Rafi on the coast outside Athens.

Elytis will probably always be remembered as a poet of the Greek summer and of the Aegean sea. His first poems date from 1929, and his most annual visits as a young man to the Greek islands. In the 1930s Elytis quickly established himself as one of the leading voices of a generation that included his fellow Nobel laureate George Seferis, and the prolific and politically committed Yannis Ritsos.

His poems of that decade celebrated, under the gathering shadows of war to come, the vitality and vibrancy of an Aegean landscape and the unharmed energies of man at its heart. The poems of *Ornithos*, his first and longest collection, published in 1940, combine a paganistic worship of nature with the free association and ebullient licence of the Surrealist movement, which he had himself helped to transplant to Greece (although characteristically he avoided defining himself or his work as Surrealist).

This exultation carried the 30-year-old Elytis even into the Second World War, and the horrors of the Axis occupation of Athens, where under conditions of censorship he continued his praise of natural forces, undeterred, in his second volume, *Sun the First* (1943). But by the time Nazi troops had arrived to take over his country,

Elytis had already had his baptism of fire. Serving in the front line on the Albanian front, in the winter of 1940-41, when the Greeks, in appalling conditions, succeeded in beating back Mussolini's invading troops. Elytis had already come close to death, and he gave form to the experience in the sombre but ultimately triumphant "Heroic and Elegiac" Song of the Lost Second Lieutenant of Albania.

In this long poem, published in 1945, and in his successor, *The Axion Esti*, published 14 years later and still reckoned to be his masterpiece, Elytis comes fully to grips with the confrontation of good and evil in the world. Life and the creative urges that bind man to Nature are celebrated in these later poems, but now they have to fight against the dark, against the inhuman, incomprehensible power of "iron and fire". But, even here, the poetic instinct survives, bloodied but triumphant, through the unshakable bond that ties man to his landscape and binds both with a stern morality which is the order of the cosmos.

After a decade of relative silence in the 1960s (prolonged by the arrival of military dictatorship in his country, and Elytis's principled refusal, along with many other established writers, to publish under those conditions), Elytis in the 1970s went on to perfect what has been termed an "interior lyricism", an almost pure lyrical statement in which words no longer refer to the world but instead create it. This is most finely exemplified in the collections *The Light-Tree* and *The Monogram* (both first published, outside Greece, in 1971). At the

same time, during the Seventies, Elytis returned to the form of the long, complex poem that he had perfected with *The Axion Esti*. Neither *Maria Nefeli* (1978) nor *The Little Sailor* (1984, but written earlier) achieves quite the mastery of large-scale architecture combined with the stinging force of minute detail that characterise the earlier work, but both have earned their admirers.

At an age when retirement is the norm in most professions, Elytis continued to write and publish prolifically through the 1980s. Among his last work *The Oxyptera Elegies* (1991) stands out: a sustained meditation on death which proclaims, with mellow warmth, the superior power of poetry, and extends the range of Elytis' writing well beyond his Aegean homeland, to embrace and breathe new life into the legacy of the German Romantics, especially Hölderlin and Novalis.

As well as being a poet, Elytis is the author of two large books of essays. Curiously, the bird that takes wing with such lyrical power in verse, turns out to be ungainly in the more sober medium of prose. Arresting in their insights and often moving in their declarations, Elytis' essays on the whole complement rather than illuminate his poems, and are often harder to read. He was prolific as a translator of verse (mainly French, but he is also credited with introducing Lorca into Greece), and from his Surrealist friends he learnt and never lost the art of photocollage, whose method has a certain affinity with the bold juxtapositions of his poems.

Elytis became almost a national institution in his native

country, to the extent that radio and television programmes were interrupted yesterday with the announcement of his death. This may reflect the greater seriousness with which poetry is still taken in Greece than it is here.

But this popularity has another cause, too. Since the late 1950s, poems of his have been set to music by popular composers such as Mikis Theodorakis, and some were even specially written as songs. In this way, a poet whose work at first sight seems highly individual, dense, and complex, has for many years appealed straight to the heart of people who may not often have sat down with a book in their hands. The passing of Elytis is a testament to that disappearing "oral culture" that was still strong in the Greece of his generation.

Elytis' international reputation goes back well beyond 1979, when he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. This has been most marked in France, where a major exhibition in his honour was held at the Pompidou Centre during the 1980s. Elytis' unembarrassed exuberance seems to transfer well into French, while Anglo-Saxon readers (and translators) tend to prefer a greater reticence. However, *The Axion Esti* has been translated into English in full, by Edmund Keeley and the late George Savidis (1974, reissued by Anvil Press, 1980). Selections from Elytis' poetry up to the early 1970s can be found in *The Sovereign Sun*, translated by Kimon Friar (Bloodaxe Books, Newcastle, originally published in the US, 1974) and the *Selected Poems*, by various hands, published by Anvil in 1981. *The Oxyptera*

*Elegies*, translated by David Connolly, is due to appear very soon.

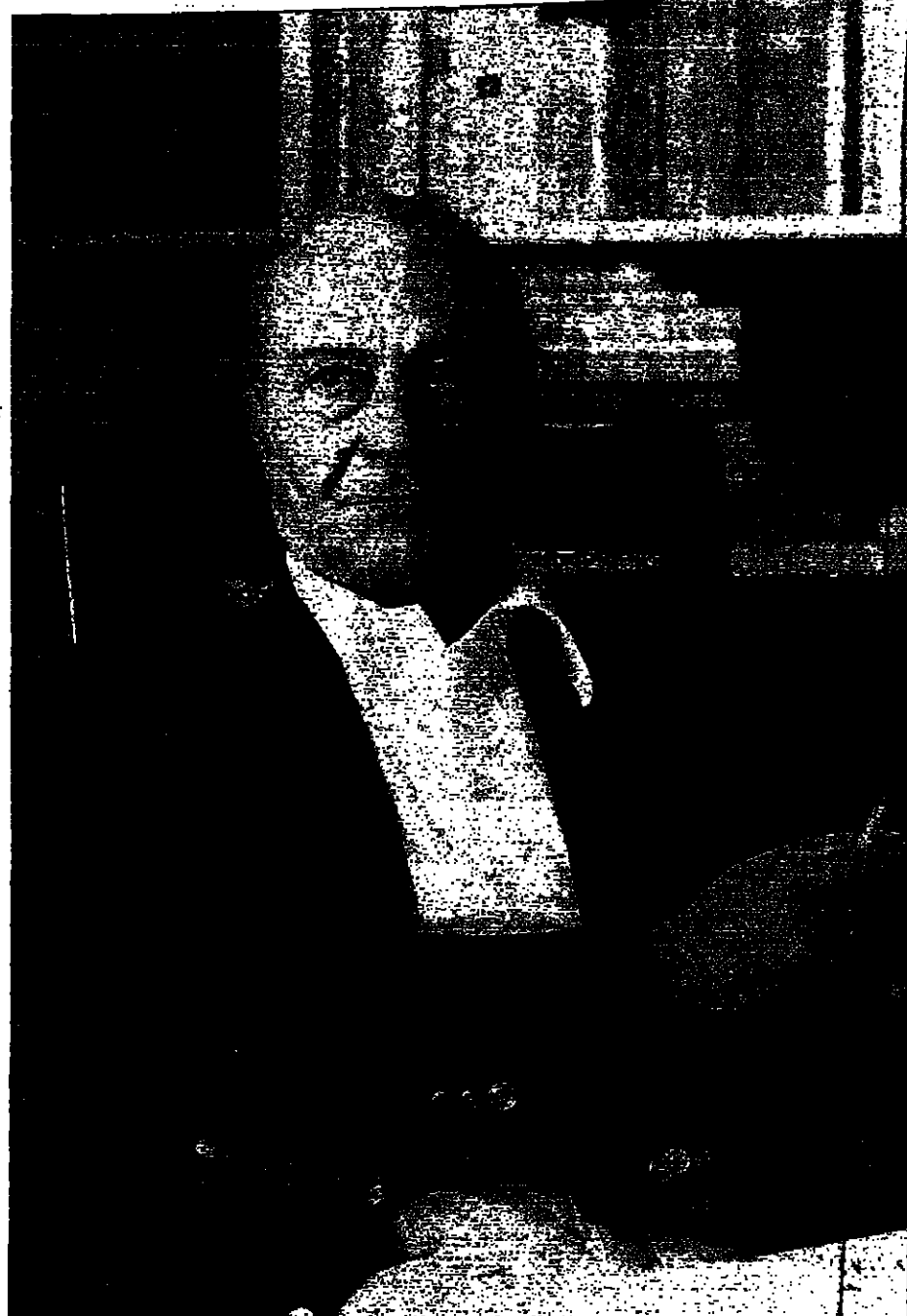
Ever since he decided, in 1936, to abandon his studies at the Athens Law School (the training-ground of so many 20th-century men of letters), Elytis' life was dedicated to poetry. He was reticent in public about such matters as political affiliation; he held administrative posts in organisations such as Greek National Radio, and the National Theatre, but not for long. An account of his life, apart from his work, might well take the form of a list of his travels, both in Greece and in Europe, especially France. His family background (his father owned a prosperous soap factory; one reason, it is supposed, for the decision of the young Odysseus Alepoudis to write under a pseudonym) gave him the opportunity for this, and so he was not obliged, like Seferis, to follow a career in parallel with his life as a poet.

But Odysseus Elytis was no poet of the ivory tower. Poetry, for him, was not an evasion of the deeper responsibilities of life; for the poet, he believed, poetry is the deepest responsibility of life. His definition of death, from an essay of 1976, both shows this, and acquires particular poignancy at the end of a writing career of almost three score years and ten:

Death is where words no longer have the power to generate, right from the start, the things that they name.

Roderick Beaton

*Odysseus Alepoudis (Odysseus Elytis), poet, born Heraklion, Crete 2 November 1911; Nobel Prize for Literature 1979; died Athens 18 March 1996.*



Nobel prizewinner: Elytis at home in Athens, 1979

Photograph: Hulton-Deutsch

## Brian Hulls

Brian Hulls was one of the finest news and documentary cameramen of his generation. It was always immensely reassuring to know that he had been assigned to a story, to meet him at the airport, or in some rotten hotel close to a front line.

You knew that if there was a picture to be had, he would get it. But just as important was his judgement, his intelligence and his nerve. We once had the dubious pleasure of running together across the old bridge at Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina while the Croat gunmen who had it in their sights were doing their best to destroy it and everything that made the mistake of moving on it. Hulls' less than intrepid reporter dashed over at top speed. He trotted behind, calmly panning his camera across the gorge of the river Neretva and the ruins of the city.

The world has been through a lot of pain since the end of the Cold War. Brian Hulls was usually there to record what was happening. I worked with him in Saudi Arabia, in Baghdad during the Gulf War, in Iraqi Kurdistan after it ended, in Somalia, in Sarajevo and in Mostar. He was a delightful travelling companion. He produced some of the most memorable images that have been seen on television.

Hulls was born in 1947 in London, and until the age of nine lived in Malaysia, where his father worked for GEC. He was educated at Charterhouse Secondary Modern School and then at the Polytechnic, Regent Street, where he met a young journalism student called Alison Campbell. He had no money, because he had spent his entire first term's grant on a cine-camera. She wasn't put off. They married in 1969, the year when, after many applications, he joined the BBC as a trainee film editor.

He went freelance in 1976. That was the only way to become a cameraman. A Middle

Eastern television company commissioned him to film and direct and he travelled all over the world. For a while he lived in Tehran as a field producer for the American network ABC. Then, after the fall of the Shah, he returned to the region to cover the Iran-Iraq war.

Later in the Eighties, with a young family, he had a quieter life, basing himself in Somerset for the ITV company TSW. But the international news bug is hard to resist. He returned to the BBC in 1990, just before Saddam Hussein's troops invaded Kuwait.

Brian Hulls was a quiet man. If his colleagues were failing to live up to the high professional standards he set, he could be less than monosyllabic. I saw him lose his cool only once, when a hapless newspaper reporter came between him and his craft. Just after the Iraqi invasion in 1990, we travelled to a dusty town on the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border to meet a *Walter Mitty-ish member of the Kuwaiti resistance*. The reporter kept objecting to Hulls' moving around the room to get a full range of shots. After the masked Kuwaiti had left, Hulls turned on the scribbler. "When you write, do you use commas and full stops? Do you follow the rules of grammar? The shots I was getting were just as important."

And in case that was not clear enough, he offered to take the poor man into the room to give him a short, sharp introduction to the mysteries of television news.

Impatient reporters and producers who worked with Hulls were soon told that good pictures take time, even when the shells are getting a little too close and the building, or what's left of it, is starting to shake. He hated being rushed. He had real guts, but he never took stupid risks. He wore his helmet and flak jacket when less experienced cameramen were swaggering around in shirtsleeves. He knew that war is dangerous (it is sur-



Hulls: producing much more than the first draft of history to which reporters aspire

prising how many do not) but he knew too that the only way to be really safe is to stay at home.

On the first night of the Gulf War Iraqi security guards prowled the corridors of the Hotel Rasheed in Baghdad rounding up the foreign press and ushering them, none too politely, to the shelters. Hulls hid in some dark place until they had gone, then went back to work, filming the Allied air-raids until dawn. The pictures he shot that night went round the world. They were used recently in a major documentary series. No doubt they will be seen again and again in the years ahead. Cameramen like Brian Hulls produce much more than the first draft of history to which reporters are said to aspire. Future generations who want to know how history looked and sounded will turn to

his work long after all the first drafts have been thrown away.

Hulls was a photo-journalist who never forgot that a work in war-zones was often the worst day or the last day, for the people he saw. He would return to their families later without his camera, with presents and kind words. He never forgot that the people he was dealing with were human beings, which for some colleagues is the easiest way of dealing with the suffering witnessed. One day during the siege of east Mostar he was filming while the town was being shelled. An elderly woman staggered out of the dust and smoke. Her home had been hit. With great sensitivity and professionalism Hulls kept on filming while her dying husband was loaded on to a fire-engine and driven to the channel-house that served as a hospital. He was

there as the doctors pronounced the man dead and as his widow started to grieve.

Afterwards he befriended the woman and explained why he had been there. On later trips to Mostar he brought a few things that she needed. She was touched beyond measure by his concern. She told me that her husband's death had not been in vain, because Hulls and his camera had been there to record what was happening to them and to the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

After his cancer was diagnosed Brian Hulls fought until the end. Nobody who knew him expected anything else.

Jeremy Bowen

*Brian Hulls, cameraman: born London 15 August 1947; married 1969 Alison Campbell (two daughters); died Claydon, Devon 13 March 1996.*

## Ray Cline

Ray Cline was one of the Central Intelligence Agency's top analysts of the Soviet Union. Throughout his career he fought for the agency to concentrate more on "pure" intelligence and less on the covert operations run by its "Praetorian Guard", the Directorate for Plans.

In 1956 Cline decided, correctly, that the text of Nikita Khrushchev's famous "secret speech" to the Soviet Communist Party's Twentieth Congress, which the agency had received from an Israeli source, was authentic and persuaded Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), to publish it in the face of opposition from several of the agency's senior barons.

These men, among them James Jesus Angleton, head of Counter-Espionage, and Frank Wisner Sr., the Director for Plans, wanted to keep the secret speech secret, and leak out Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin's crimes a little at a time to encourage the anti-Soviet resistance in eastern Europe. Cline persuaded Allen Dulles that it would be wiser to make the speech public.

Cline's reward was to be chosen, along with James Billington, then a CIA official, now a distinguished historian and Librarian of Congress, to accompany him on an indiscreetly publicised world tour. One high point came when a Hong Kong tailor, summoned to make suits for a supposedly anonymous American, bowed deeply and said, "Thank you, Mr Dulles, for your custom!"

In 1965, when Dulles's successor, the industrialist John McCone, retired as the head of the CIA, Cline was Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI), was one of several serious candidates to take over as DCI.

Perhaps partly for this reason, partly because he felt that the head of the Agency ought to be an intelligence professional, but mostly because he thought

he was an unintelligent and incompetent amateur, Cline tangled repeatedly with the man who got the top job, Admiral "Red" Raborn.

Cline, his colleague Richard Helms recorded, "thought Raborn was a horse's ass and he didn't hesitate to say so". On one occasion the admiral suddenly discovered that the Cline was not getting on well with the Russians. Cline, who had known this for years and whose department had produced more detailed analysis on this than on any other single subject, could not contain his irritation. When Raborn asked Cline to send over any studies he had on Sino-Soviet relations, Cline asked acidly, "In a wheelbarrow?"

After several bruising confrontations with Raborn, Cline asked for a foreign posting and became the CIA's bureau chief in Frankfurt. But he had the last word. He went to Clark Clifford, the powerful Washington lawyer and former Truman Administration official who was the head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and to McGeorge Bundy, his National Security Adviser, and insisted that Raborn must go. President Johnson agreed and replaced Raborn after only one year in office.

Although essentially an analyst, with great expertise on the Soviet Union, and committed to the importance of intelligence as opposed to covert action, Cline could take a robust line about the usefulness of action when he saw the need. In 1964 when the "Simba" rebels in Zaïre were holding 1,000 prisoners, including Americans and Belgian nuns, Cline argued forcefully that the CIA should go in "like gangbusters".

In rapid succession he suggested "sending in a team through the jungle, bombing the city, a helicopter raid and a parachute drop". It was his opposite number Richard Helms, the Director for Plans and as such the

covert action chief, who successfully counselled abstinence.

Cline played an important role in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. As well as briefing the President on his directorate's assessment of the risk from Soviet missiles which had been secretly installed in the island, Cline studied reports from American secret agents in Cuba and personally briefed Cuban refugees. Later, in his book *Secrets, Spies and Scholars* (1977), he defended covert operations, arguing that it was no different from secret assistance to countries friendly to the United States. In particular, he argued that the CIA's attempts to co-operate with the Mafia to assassinate Fidel Castro were justifiable.

"It was not illegal," he wrote, for the CIA to invite the Mafia to kill Castro, since American organised crime syndicates "former Havana gambling empire gave them some contacts to work with, and since a gangland killing would be unlikely to be attributed to the US government".

From 1969 to 1973 he headed the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Now bearded, he was a familiar figure in Washington men's clubs. After his retirement he worked on his book, one of the most thoughtful accounts of secret intelligence work.

Godfrey Hodgson

*Ray Cline, political scientist, writer, born Anderson, Illinois 4 June 1918; Director, US Naval Auxiliary Communications Centre, Taipei 1958-62; Deputy Director of Intelligence, CIA 1962-66; Special Adviser to the American Embassy, Bonn 1966-69; Director, State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research 1969-73; Director, World Power Studies, Georgetown University 1973-86; married 1941 Marjorie Wilson (two daughters); died Arlington, Virginia 15 March 1996.*

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## BIRTHS

**CLARENGOLD:** On 7 March 1996, to Rachel (nee Chambers) and Andrew, a daughter, Eleanor Peta. **MEWERTER:** On 1 March 1996, in Philadelphia, to Maureen and Graeme, a son, Paul James, a brother for Sarah, Iain and Andrew.

## DEATHS

**PARSONS:** On 16 March, peacefully, Olive, aged 104, Funeral Tuesday 21 March, Golder Green Crematorium at 3pm. Flowers, or donations to Amnesty, Enquiries to Malcolm Jones & Metcalfe, (01442) 864548. **SPRINGETT:** Jack, alias CBE MA, on 15 March 1999 aged 80, much loved and loving husband, father and grandfather. Funeral service and celebration of his life on Tuesday 26 March, 11.15am at Acton Road Methodist Church, family flowers only. Donations if desired for Children Aid, c/o T Pennack & Sons Funeral Directors, 1-3 Melton Road, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7DW.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, telephone 0171-293 2011.

## Birthdays

Miss Ursula Andress, actress, 60; Sir Nigel Broomfield, ambassador to Germany, 59; Miss Glenn Close, actress, 49; Lady Georgina Coleridge-Johnson, 80; Mr Peter Cotes, industrial director and producer, 84; Professor Ronald Girdwood, former President, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 78; The Right Rev Ronald Gordon, former Bishop of Lambeth, 69; Mr Bryan Hildrew, former managing director, Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 76; Vice-Admiral Sir Norman King, chairman, Bucks Health Authority, 63; Sir David Llewellyn, former managing director, Royal Academy of Music, 68; Mr Paul Marland MP, 56; Sir Peter Mascfield, aviation authority, 82; Mr Philip Mason, novelist, 80; Lord Plant of Highfield, Master, St Catherine's College, Oxford, 51; Li-Gen Sir Alan Remy, Chief Honorary Steward, Westminster Abbey, 71; Sir Kenneth Robinson, former chairman, the Arts Council, 85; Mr Philip Roth, novelist, 63; Sir Leonard Scopes, former diplomat, 84; Mr Bruce Willis, actor, 41; Miss Mary Wimbush, actress, 72.

## Anniversaries

Births: George de la Tour, painter, 1593; Tobias George Smollett, physician and author, 1721; Charles Wat-

son Wentworth, second Marquis of Rockingham, statesman, 1730; Joseph Bates, composer, 1741; Dr David Livingstone, explorer and missionary, 1813; Sir Richard Francis Burton, scholar and explorer, 1821; William Allingham, poet, 1824; Albert Plukham Ryder, painter, 1947; William Jennings Bryan, politician and speaker, 1860; Sergei Pavlovich Diaghilev, founder of the Diaghilev ballet company, 1872; Max Reger, teacher and composer, 1873; Sir John Hubert Marshall, archaeologist, 1876; Joseph Albert, abstract painter and poet, 1888; Deaths: Thomas Killigrew, playwright, 1683; René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, explorer, murdered by his own men in Texas, 1687; Thomas William Daniell, landscape painter, 1840; Mary Aning, finder of the first ichthyosaurus fossil, 1847; William Henry Fryd, architect, 1857; Friedrich Wilhelm Sedow-Godenhaus, painter, 1862; Antoine-Thomson d'Abbadie, explorer and scientist, 1897; Arthur James Balfour, first Earl Balfour, statesman, 1890; Edgar Rice Burroughs, novelist and creator of "Tarzan", 1890; George Georgejude-Dej, Romanian prince minister, 1965; Stephen Graham, travel writer, 1973; Faith Cuthrell Baldwin, romantic novelist, 1978; Alan Badel, actor, 1982. On this day:

The Rev John White formed the New England Company in Massachusetts Bay, 1620; the US Senate refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations Covenant, 1920; the opera *Faust* by Gounod was performed for the first time, Paris, 1859; Sydney Harbour bridge was officially opened, 1932; following an internal dispute, British parachute troops took over the Caribbean island of Anguilla, 1969; Willy Brandt and Willy Stoph, heads of West and East Germany, met for the first time at Erfurt, 1970. Today is the Feast Day of St Edmund, prince of Northumbria, St John of Patmos, St Joseph (husband of the Virgin) and St Landolf.

## Lectures

National Gallery: Alexander Svirgide, "Constantin (III) The Hay-Wain", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Anna Contadini, "Islamic Tiles", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Rachel Barnes, "John Everett Millais: the Pre-Raphaelite years and after", 1pm. National Portrait Gallery: Frances Homan, "William Hogarth's Portrait of William Jones", 1.10pm. Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, London N6: Robert Pomphrey, "The Pursuit of Music", 7.35pm. Royal Society, London SW1: Pro-

fessor Steve Jones, "Has the Genetic Utopia Arrived?", 6pm. RIBA Architecture Centre, London W1: Jo Noero, "Gauteng Architecture", 6.30pm. University College London, London WC1: Professor Theo Hermans, "Translation's Other", 5.30pm.

## Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Sir Nicholas Bonsor Bt MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a lunch held yesterday at Lancaster House, London SW1, in honour of Mr Mikhail Popov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova.

## Corporation of London

The Lord Mayor of London, Mr John Chalmers, and the Lady Mayoress, Mrs Chalmers, together with the Sheriffs and their ladies, received the guests at a luncheon held yesterday at the Mansion House, London EC1, on the occasion of the visit by Mr Ingemar Ingemarsson, Lord Mayor of Stockholm, and Mrs Ingemar. Among those present were:

Mr Axel Weimerhoffer, First Vice-President of the Stockholm City Council, and Mrs Weimerhoffer; Mrs Eva Ingemarsson, Second Vice-President of the City Council, and Mr Staffan Ingemarsson, Mr Lars-Mike Nilsson, Ambassador of Sweden, and Mrs Nilsson, Viscountess Craigavon, Lord and Lady Mountbatten, Lord

and Lady Porter of Ludlowham; Mr Alan Boddie QC, Mr John QC, Mr Alan A. Berr, all QC; Anthony Derwin Hays, James Rogers, Andrew H.R. Maitland, Christopher R. Maitland, Clare M. Maitland.

## Royal Over-Seas League

Professor David O'Keefe, Director, Centre for the Law of the European Union, University College London, was the guest speaker at a meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League's Discussion Circle held yesterday evening at Over-Seas House, St James's, London SW1. His subject was "Current Issues of European Integration". Mrs Elizabeth Cresswell presided.

## Recorders

The following have been appointed Recorders: South Eastern Circuit: David M. Best, Inigo G. Bang, Joseph John Boothby, Marie Therese Cartwright, Suzanne Coust, Karen H. Asoona QC, Patricia M.T. Duggan, Paul Douglas, Alan E. Greenwood, Susan Hamilton QC, Walter Greville Howkeworth, Nigel R.W. Lambert, David A. Landau, Timothy J. Langford QC, Humphrey I. Mulline, Richard G.B. McConne QC, Rodney G. McEminson, Neil A. McEminson, Jeffrey V. Peglar, George P. Polman QC, Richard J. Ransell, Christopher R.A. Solon QC, Pamela Sciven QC, Andrew C. Smith QC, Christopher J. Smyth, Alan C. Seymour, Michael A. Szepevsky QC, Christopher J. Sutton-Matlock, Nigel C. Van der Bijl, Graham B.N. White, Judge E. Willett, Hazel E. Williamson QC, Alison W. Worsley QC, Michael P. Vinton. Western Circuit: Paul R. Burdick, Andrew J.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen holds in luncheon at Buckingham Palace, The Princess of Wales visits the Prince's Trust Residential Centre at Pontefract's Sand Bay Hotel, Newcastle, Avon; and as President, the Prince's Youth Business Trust, attends the Prince's Trust Residential Centre at the London Coliseum, London WC2. The Princess Royal, President, British Kaituma and Clothing Export Council, visits Rwanda, Longborough, Leicestershire as Patron, National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, optimises premises, Rutland Citizens Advice Bureau, Oakham, Rutland, Leicestershire; as President, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, visits Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau, Leicestershire, and visits the trust's newly completed development at Long Whinton, Leicestershire. The Duchess of Gloucester visits Royal Air Force Leamington, Warwickshire, Scotland. Prince Michael of Kent, President of the Institute of the Motor Industry, opens the new Headquarters of the Institution of Highway Engineers and Transportation in Enfield, London. The Duke of Devonshire, President of the Duke of Devonshire Charity, Royal Festival Hall, London SE1.

Changing of the Guard. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

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Policy



# Why the mafia is into your beef

The EU ban on growth hormones for cows has created a lucrative black market, reports Katharine Butler

It might seem an unlikely product for the mafia to be interested in. Drugs, sex and gambling are its usual terrain. But in Europe, particularly in Belgium, the mafia is into beef.

It is not the cows themselves that black marketeers are interested in so much as the hormone drugs that enhance meat production. The use of hormone drugs in meat production has been outlawed in the European Union since 1989. But that blanket ban has helped to create a lucrative and well-organised black market.

The organised criminal rings that control this trade are prepared to go to disturbing lengths to circumvent the ban. Murder, for a start, is not

beyond them. A year ago hormone dealers put out a contract on Karel Van Noppen, a 43-year-old Belgian government vet and chief meat inspector who led a relentless crusade to stamp out hormone abuse.

His widow Mieke recalls the death threats, the phone calls in the night, the warnings to ease off. "I did not try to stop him. It was his whole life, I knew he would not stop" she says.

Van Noppen's associates believe he was close to unmasking the masterminds of a network spanning Belgium and Holland and probably extending into France when he was silenced. He was shot at close range just yards from his front door.

Van Noppen was not alone. Another Belgian vet had his front door peppered with bullets. An MEP who has campaigned against the hormone trade has had a petrol bomb and a hand grenade hurled at him. Other vets have been beaten up.

Hormone dealing is thought to be the second most lucrative organised crime racket in Belgium after drugs.

Hormone compounds are relatively easy to manufacture. When injected into animal muscle to artificially stimulate growth, hormones can yield increases in profits for intensive producers by large margins, anything from 10 per cent to more than double the normal profit of about £100 per animal.

The Belgian authorities reacted to the murder by putting in place tougher controls, spot checks on farms and at abattoirs, and setting up a dedicated police unit to attack the mafia. A new law has brought in fines of up to £510,000.

But the killers have not been traced and the Belgian agriculture minister, Karel Pinxten, admitted recently that the mafia's "hard core" is as active as ever.

Consumer groups, spurred by a wave of public revulsion following the Van Noppen murder, have been monitoring meat in the shops and claim that as much as 25 per cent of beef on sale contains hormone residues. Butchers and super-

market chains are increasingly turning to organic producers or suppliers able to guarantee hormone-free meat.

Public concern has also been mounting in Ireland, which is believed to be a key target for drug dealers operating out of Belgium and Holland.

In 1992 the Irish police seized a large quantity of banned growth hormones when they raided the home of a senior official in the Irish Department of Agriculture. Just last month a Tipperary cattle dealer, Danny Finning, was shot, possibly by an IRA punishment squad, for trading in clenbuterol, the so-called "angel dust". Eleven cattle in Finning's meat plant were

found with traces of the drug in their bodies. Peter Dargan, a former president of the Irish Veterinary Union, triggered alarm recently with a damaging claim that a quarter of Irish beef cattle is illegally hormone treated. The claim was emphatically denied by the Irish government, which says its controls show the figure is only around 3 per cent.

But privately officials admit that the battle against purveyors of cocktails like "angel dust" and "jungle juice" is a long way from being won, despite harsh penalties ranging from fines of £100,000 to 10-year jail terms.

"We believe the mafia is small but it is effective. And you will always find a minority of

producers ready to take the risk," said one Irish official. Some critics of the EU ban, reconfirmed and tightened by agriculture ministers yesterday despite British objections, argue that Brussels, by choosing to go against the scientific evidence, is playing into the hands of the illegal drug dealers by driving the trade underground.

Hormones are permitted in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, so inevitably some European producers believe they can compete better with the help of anabolic steroids or similar substances. Consumers could be at even greater risk, the argument goes, because users of illegal

hormones are using unsupervised cocktails. They are also injecting them directly into the flesh of the beast to avoid detection, whereas formerly they might have been concentrated in the ear or animal parts not destined for human consumption.

Some veterinary medicines that are legal for treating respiratory conditions in horses and pets are also being abused as cattle growth promoters. Scientists agree that residues of these substances could pose alarming risks for human health but are now wondering if the mafia would find a market for them if the "safe" steroid hormones like oestradiol and progesterone were decriminalised.

## The making of a modern beef machine: how hormones make cows grow fatter

### What are growth promoters?

In 1960, an Italian school boy allegedly started to grow breasts after eating veal that contained a synthetic hormone, oestriol, which had been given to cattle to promote weight gain and increase the proportion of lean muscle. At the time of the scandal there were few controls on the use of hormone growth promoters in cattle within the EC. Within a year, the stilbenes and stilbene derivatives were banned throughout the EC but there was no agreement on five other hormones. Three of them are already naturally present in cattle: oestradiol, progesterone, and testosterone, while two trenbolone and zeranol are synthetic analogues of the natural hormones.

The drugs fall into the same general class as the anabolic steroids whose human analogues have been abused by bodybuilders. The bovine equivalents increase the efficiency with which cattle convert feed to muscle. Because different countries were regulating the use of growth promoters differently, the Council of Agriculture Ministers decided in 1988 to ban all growth promoters completely. The EC also banned the import of meat produced by the prohibited method. In 1995, the Gatt Uruguay Round was finally implemented and the United States announced that it would regard the European Union ban as a barrier to trade.

**The ear** Farmers (not vets) use an injection gun with a needle inserted into the cartilage at the base of the ear, and press the trigger to inject. The pellet then acts as a slow release patch, rather like some long-acting human contraceptives - allowing a small amount of the hormone to enter the animal's bloodstream continually over subsequent months.

### The back

Farmers estimate that they can get a 10 per cent increase in the efficiency with which the cows convert their feed into muscle (meat). As a result of the use of hormones and mass-production techniques, American beef is significantly cheaper than European. However, some animal breeders believe that similar gains can be made by selective breeding "and you don't have to pay pharmaceutical companies".

### The cow

#### The hips

Animal welfare organisations maintain that selective breeding has already pushed farm animals close to their physiological limits. They warn that the animals' skeletons will not keep pace with the accelerated growth provoked by injections of hormones, which would trigger literally crippling deformities in the legs and hips. Such problems have been seen in poultry and pigs.

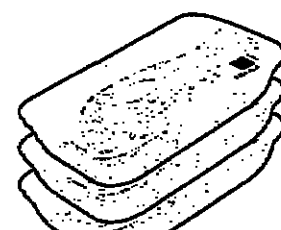


### The heart

Accelerated growth also increases the demands on the animals' cardiovascular systems, according to Compassion in World Farming.

### The udder

Injections of bovine growth hormone produced by genetic engineering have been proposed as a means of increasing milk production. Although this is not the subject of the current controversy, it is another area in which the EU and the US are out of step. Growth hormone is also naturally produced by the cows, and so any residues in the milk would be indistinguishable from the real thing. But there are reports of increased mastitis (infections of the udder) in cows where the injections have been used on an experimental basis.



### The chunk of meat

Consumers and health officials were worried that residues of the hormones might be present in meat after slaughter, with consequent health effects, including the possible "masculinising" of women who ate meat containing testosterone residues. Even before the Italian health scare, there had been accounts of butchers fattening more sons than average as a result of their exposure to hormones. But in 1982 a Scientific Working Group under the chairmanship of professor Eric Lamming of Nottingham University, reported to the European Commission that the three natural hormones would not present any harmful effects to the health of consumers when used as growth promoters. The risks to consumers are difficult to establish but do not seem to be great.

Never the less Dr Chris Brown, beef strategy manager for the UK's Meat and Livestock Commission, says: "We are not talking about doubling or quadrupling an animal's weight. But producers are conscious of the 'what is the consumer going to say about this?' factor. If we can't sell it to the consumers, then there is no going to be the drive for it. At the end of the day, political considerations are going to drive this one."

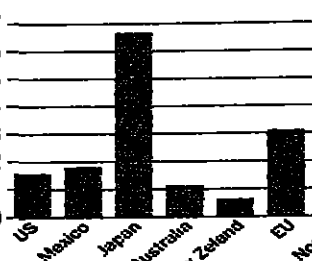
### The farmers

The administration even of powerful drugs that are neatly packaged as slow release injectable pellets is unlikely to cause an occupational health and safety risk to farmers. However, there are reports of some European farmers adding growth promoters illegally to feed and being exposed to dangerous concentrations - leading to death in a couple of cases. This appears not to be a problem with the hormones but with the powerful drug clenbuterol - a "beta-blocker" that can cause severe heart problems. There is evidence of a lucrative black market in Ireland and continental Europe for this particular drug.

### The world of beef

#### Producer prices for beef

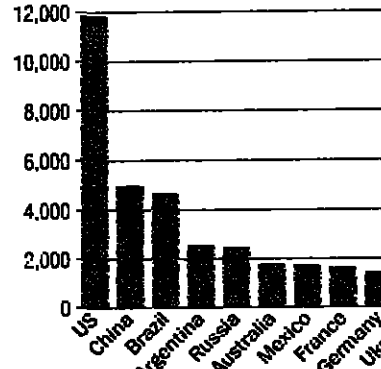
SDR/kg carcass weight



\*SDR: Special Drawing Rights: the IMF's currency measure, based on a basket of the US, German, French, Japanese and UK currencies

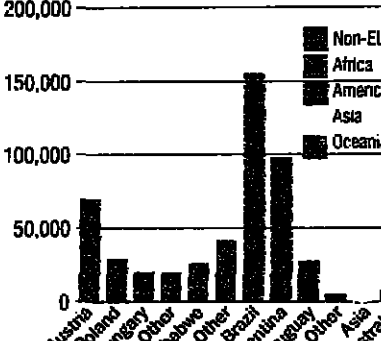
### Top 10 forecast beef producers 1996

thousand metric tonnes



### Exporters of beef to EU

thousand metric tonnes



Research: Ben Summers & Anna Davies

Text by Tom Wilkie

## DIARY

### Dr Ruth on sex and the sabbath

Dr Ruth Westheimer, the New York University professor best known for doling out sex therapy with lashings of chutzpah on her television show



(below), has turned her attention to the Jewish sabbath. It is, she tells the forthcoming edition of the Jewish Quarterly magazine, "by design a deeply erotic experience."

For those who may have missed this association over the past few thousand years, she explains: "Making love on Friday night is a specific celebration of the unity of God's masculine and feminine aspects.... Almost every custom of the Jewish sabbath observance facilitates our goal of lighting each other's fire and becoming entwined.... The lovers dine by candlelight. The meal begins with the sharing of wine.... When they are ready to go to bed, the lovers almost can't help but do so in a highly seductive and seducible state of mind."

Dinner by candlelight, hands touching over the sabbath bread; how unromantic of Dr Ruth's female interviewer to interject: "I don't quite see how Sabbath can be erotic. On Friday night, I see a very tired Jewish woman."

Perhaps that tired woman has been taking Dr Ruth's philosophy to heart.

### Lightweight approach to crime policy

As the editor of the Guardian has endeavoured to repair that newspaper's reputation for misprints, I must assume that its report yesterday of the Lib Dems' spring conference is accurate, and we can expect an Orwellian police state if Paddy Ashdown comes to power.

Those weighing in under 10 stone will be afraid to walk the streets in daylight hours. What other construction can I put on the report of Mr Ashdown's speech, where he pledges to reverse the new left's policies, which "punish the thinner but ignore the thin".

### It's over Down Under

Poor Jack Cunningham, Labour's shadow heritage secretary, is having to burn the midnight oil rewriting the rewrite of his party's arts manifesto. The first rewrite occurred after his leader Tony Blair visited Australia and was much taken with the then Prime

Minister, Paul Keating's 101-page policy for cultural regeneration, *Creative Nation*. This could be one of Labour's big ideas for the next election, Mr Blair told his team. And so Mr Cunningham set about beefing up the party's arts policy. Now that Australia's voters, with barely a thought for Mr Blair or Mr Cunningham, have swept Mr Keating (above) from office, our own Labour Party has decided that a policy associated with yesterday's man might not be such a good idea.



### A heavenly way to go, pop-pickers ...

I doubt that Led Zeppelin intended the title of their classic rock song "Stairway To Heaven" to be taken quite as literally as the disc jockey Alan Freeman seems to have taken it. Sixty-eight-year-old Freeman, just two years away from being radio's first septuagenarian pop broadcaster, told BBC's *Pebble Mill* how he would like to make his final broadcast.

"I would like to think I can go on perhaps for another couple of years, and possibly have a fatal heart attack and go just like that, while I'm playing 'Stairway To Heaven'". I think that would be wonderful.

Unfortunately, fate has a habit of not granting us our dearest wishes. Beware a coronary mid-way between Kylie Minogue and the weather report.

### Screening out violence

Among the welter of "violence in society" articles that have followed Dunblane, I was interested to see Andrew Neil in the *Sunday Times* sounding off against violent films on television. He writes: "The violence on British television is less graphic than in the cinema, though the Hollywood 'splatter movies' shown at night on satellite television are a disgrace that no self-respecting adults should watch, much less let their children near."

Quite. I urge that he takes the matter up with the founding chief executive of Sky TV, Mr Andrew Neil.

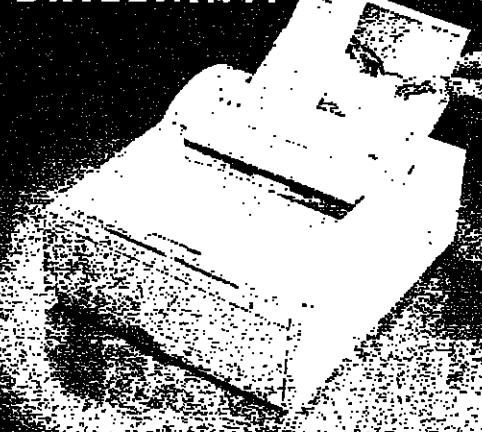
### Unhealthy eating

This sign spotted outside a charcuterie in Brussels may not help your appetite: "Buy British Beef here and you won't get better."

Eagle Eye

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# THE INDEPENDENT

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## V-rated violence

From 1998, new American television sets will have to be fitted with a chip that should allow parents to censor programmes marked in advance by broadcasters according to a ratings system. The V-chip, as it has been christened, is now being promoted nearer home. The European Parliament has declared in its favour. The National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, said yesterday she wants to evaluate it in the wake of the Dunblane killings. The maverick Liberal Democrat MP David Alton is threatening to amend broadcasting legislation unless she is quick about it.

This is a thorny area. Establishing the precise link between violence on television and violent behaviour is difficult. Even if we accept that there is a link, establishing a consensus on a ratings system would be tortuous. Agreement might be possible on the extremes of fictional violence, but then some of the most violent and horrifying films - Seven, for instance - do not show acts of violence, just some of the results. Beyond that, agreeing on acceptable standards of swearing and sex would be even more difficult.

Even more problematic is the way a V-chip would be quickly outflanked by technology and children's adeptness at using it. The technology of communications cannot be controlled. It respects no national boundaries, social codes or generational precedence. Young children can programme videos and dial up Web

pages at the outer limits of the World Wide Web with a skill that leaves adults in their wake. The new American law is already out of date. It may not cover the television cards that can turn a desktop computer into a television receiver; it does not cover the way television pictures are becoming available over the Internet.

But none of these excuses fatalism. It is adults who pay for their children's surfing habits on the Internet. Adults read *Radio Times*. It is adults who need to think more clearly about what is fit for viewing or downloading. Welcome efforts are already being made to make exploration of the Internet safer for children by using "system invigilators" that patrol the boundaries of zones which parents might judge unsuitable for children.

As for television, the V-chip can only be "another tool" in parents' hands, as Lady Howe of the Broadcasting Standards Council put it. It cannot substitute for the time and effort good media parenting requires. What it ought to do, however, is open up a debate and help us to refine our thinking about suitability, about the kinds of violence that young viewers ought to be exposed to.

The V-chip only works if broadcasters have agreed a ratings system. One is needed, and one a lot more sophisticated than the existing 9pm "watershed" or the system cinema and video distributors use. That is going to be difficult, but it is high time a start is made.

## Tightening the net

Congratulations to Emma Bonino, for putting her head in the Cornish fishermen's den. The European fisheries commissioner's willingness to mend the EU's nets in public is a model other senior Brussels officials should follow. She made few converts on the quayside in Newlyn. But she said three things that are, broadly speaking, true. First, the EU needs a Common Fisheries Policy (CFP); second, it is in the interests of British fishermen to belong to it; third, the present policy has failed and needs to be reworked.

We need a European policy because fish wander. There is no point in protecting the adults in British waters if the piscine children and teenagers are being massacred in, say, Dutch waters. Purely national solutions do not work. The CFP is based on supposedly scientific limits on the number of fish that can be caught. The permitted annual catch is divided into quotas for national fleets. The size of those fleets is not restricted. In theory, at least, the least productive boats in a national fleet should be driven out of business and the industry should find its equi-

librium, with just enough boats catching just enough fish.

However, in practice, that does not happen. Governments pander to fishermen and inflate the catch levels recommended by the scientists. The policing of quotas and net sizes has been inadequate. British fishermen were rightly incensed by the recent European Court decision allowing member states to poach each other's quotas by registering fishing vessels in other countries ("quota-hopping"). This makes sense under single market rules, but it blows the CFP apart.

As a result of loopholes such as this, Europe has too many boats chasing too few fish. A more effective solution would be to impose a much stricter system of licensing on boats to restrict the size of fleets. This could be combined with a market to auction and then trade the licenses. This mixture of EU quota setting and market trading for licenses would be much more effective in preserving fish stocks and managing a more orderly contraction of the industry, thereby helping to limit the damage to traditional fishing communities.

## Pretty vacant, Pistols

Bill Grundy would be a happy man today. It was Grundy who made the Sex Pistols famous in December 1976. He interviewed them on a teenage television news magazine. They scowled and swore and despised him. His affronted impotence in the face of their disdain symbolised the shock felt by a generation of parents at the arrival of punk.

Were it not for the evident discomfort all those safety pins and ripped jeans caused the older generation, musically mediocre punk may never have taken off. But in part thanks to Grundy's evident displeasure it was irresistible for many young people. If you could shock your parents that much, it had to be worth doing.

Now the Sex Pistols are back, without the sadly departed Sid Vicious. You might think Grundy would be turning in his

grave. But you'd be wrong. The Sex Pistols are back because they are sad, middle-aged entertainers in need of a fast buck and all too happy to exploit the commercial opportunism of a record industry that 20 years ago they led a generation to believe they disdained.

At least the Rolling Stones and Status Quo have never made any pretence of their commercialism. That is part of what makes them such good acts. But the Sex Pistols? Can you imagine all those clashing chords, tuneless songs and pretentious words from people old enough to have negative equity, kids in private schools and personal pensions. They'll probably turn up to the gigs in Volvos.

No, this is Bill Grundy's revenge. For the Sex Pistols have returned as Bill Grundy: well, almost.

## The truth ... or the French translation

Did you know that there is a mid-Channel language half-way between France and England which is a mixture of French and English? No, it is not Franglais - indeed, it is as far from Franglais as it is possible to get, being invented by and approved of by the French.

Let me put it another way. I received a letter with a French postmark the other day from one Marquise de MacMahon, a lady of whose existence I had been unaware until that moment. It was in no sense a personal letter, as she seems blissfully unaware of my existence outside a mailing list and merely wants me to buy some of her wines by mail order. In fact, the letter started with the most impersonal opening possible, namely "Dear Sir, dear Madame".

Let me quote some more. "Dear Sir, dear Madame. The earth slowly comes to life again, the green spikes of our daffodils show streaks of yellow, the vines are 'crying' from their final pruning. Symbolic for a religious Easter, with all nature bursting with new energy and promise for the year ahead."

"We are moving into the Chinese year of the Rat, a year that promises prosperity. I hope this includes grape harvests! The 1996 vintage is



MILES KINGSTON

already formed within the eight tiny buds along each pruned vine stem.

"The warm wet winters and springs we have been having these past few years do not help eliminate the various nasty creepy-crawlies or fungi that menace our vineyards. Fortunately, vineyards are inspired by the eternal cycle of hope and faith inherent in any kind of agriculture: every year the crop is going to make the best *millesime* this century!"

"Air the vines a little to allow the full savours and nose to develop. Don't ice the bottles, just bring them straight up from your unheated cellar or pantry, un corked, and as they say in the southern US. Enjoy! Order now and stock up for all those spring festivities, Easter egg-hunt lunches, god-daughters' confirmations, nephews' weddings.... Or just relax after a hard morning digging the

herbaceous border with a well deserved glass of delicious Burgundy...."

The language in which this letter is written is one that no English person on earth has ever written or spoken. It is translator's English, a language that is so tied to the language of origin that a perceptive reader could immediately identify which foreign language is being translated from, even if words such as *vigneron* and *millesime* had not been left untranslated.

This letter from the Marquise is, beyond any doubt, a literal translation from French. Only the French can so easily go into overdrive in the first sentence of a letter. "The earth slowly comes to life again, the green spikes of our daffodils show streaks of yellow, the vines are 'crying' from their final pruning."

In English it sounds ridiculous, but in French it sounds impressively ornate and semi-poetical. Or, to put it another way, ridiculous.

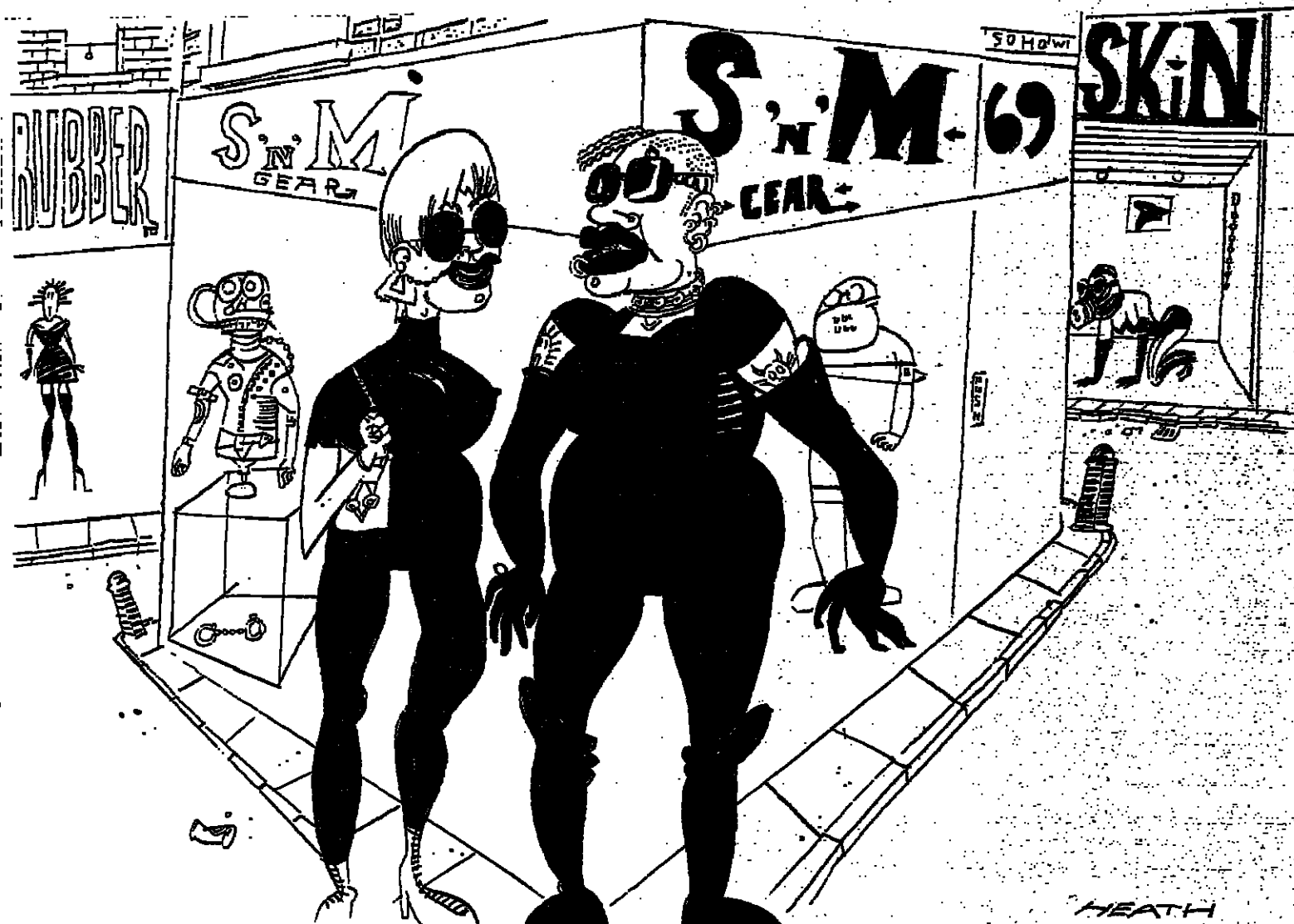
Of course, what is obvious about this letter is that it has been translated, not by a native English-speaker, but by a French person.

A native English-speaker would never say that insects are "menacing" our vineyards. "Menacer" is the common word in French, but in

English "threaten" is the common word and "menace" is slightly archaic. Nor, I think, would we use a jokey word like "creepy-crawly", nor would we say that farmers "are inspired by the eternal cycle of hope and faith." Nor would we leave untranslated words such as "vigneron" and "millesime". A vigneron is a wine-grower, so why not say so? Does it sound more impressive in French?

And it is assumed that we know what a "millesime" is, but I have to admit that I didn't know the word. So I looked it up. And it means "the year of manufacture" or "vintage". The French don't have a word as generally useful as our vintage. Our word "vintage" obviously covers everything covered in French by different words like *cru* and "millesime" and *année de belle récolte* but the French don't know this, so they prefer to use their own word "millesime" even though we don't know what it means.

Put it another way. A proper English translation of the original French would go like this: "Dear customer, Well, spring is here again and with any luck we'll have a good harvest this year, so I am enclosing our list of this year's prices..."



"One of my clients is a politician, and all he wants to do is come back to my place, and I have to ask him for a referendum!"

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### After Dunblane: questions for the media and an answer to critics of gun clubs

Sir: Do we really need to have every minute detail of the Dunblane tragedy emblazoned across numerous pages of our newspapers? Others may be desensitised enough to cope with every gruesome detail. I struggle simply with the bare facts.

Every child I see I worry about. I have refused to watch TV programmes whose theme is murder, shooting and violence, for how can I watch these "entertainment" when families in Dunblane are living through the reality?

Are you reporting responsibly? Or are you indulging in a journalism which lowers itself to sensationalising violence in a society which already encourages people to fill their minds with these horrors?

KATHRYN WIGGINS  
Reading, Berkshire

Sir: The horror at Dunblane seems a prime example of an event where there is tension between public and media interest in the circumstances and the right to privacy of those caught up in the tragedy.

On such occasions would it not be feasible for the media to agree to pooling arrangements whereby the news-gathering was shared, reducing to a reasonable minimum the numbers of visiting journalists and photographers?

BERNARD PAYNE  
Cheshire

Sir: I am shocked by Dr Jane Fairweather's letter (16 March). Opening your paper on Thursday morning and seeing those rows of happy faces brought home to me the full horror of this monstrous act as nothing else could have done. I broke down and wept. One cannot comprehend the grief the bereaved families are going through. I cannot believe that your photograph of class P1 could have caused any more stress than they are already suffering.

JOHN BAKER  
London SW13

Sir: Perhaps, before condemning the shooting sports, people should attend a match, and see what shooting is really about. They will see none of the likes of Thomas Hamilton, just ordinary citizens having an enjoyable day out. One of the first things they will observe is the strict safety rules, and the responsibility and care every shooter displays to those around him or her.

Shooting is one of the least aggressive sports. It does not promote the use of physical force towards any person. Men and women can compete on equal terms, and people have been known to continue competing well into their seventies.

Shooting teaches children attentiveness, and respect for rules and other people. An 18th-century Swiss writer described shooting events as "a school of morals for the young".

What happened at Dunblane was tragic, but in a society where people are presumed innocent, there will always be some dangerous individuals on the streets. In our helplessness, we try to alleviate our desperation by looking for someone or something to blame. That is all gun control will ever be.

PHILIP COOK  
Thornton Heath, Surrey

Sir: Amid the shock generated by the Dunblane killings, we should not make the mistake of seeing these as a rare eruption of incompressible evil.

Those of us who work in mental health services are faced daily with patients whose problems have their origins in cruelty and sexual exploitation experienced in childhood. Time and again, one hears stories of appalling, remorseless abuse. Childhoods are destroyed and adult survivors carry a bitter legacy of pain, betrayal, guilt, loss of self-worth and repression. In some, the emotional consequences are intolerable and the result is death by suicide. Such evil takes place every day in every part of this country, often behind facades

of impeccable respectability. It seems likely that Thomas Hamilton was a paedophile whose depraved lusts grew in strength over many years. In many individuals of this sort, such desires and the capacity to exploit others are fed by a diet of degrading pornography.

The events in Dunblane highlight our widespread failure to protect women and children from the depredations of psychopathic males. The response might begin with an immediate crackdown on child pornography and a severe drawing-in of the boundaries of what is acceptable in adult pornography. Those who commit sexual offences against women and children should face harsh and long sentences commensurate with the damage which they cause.

Dr JS CALLENDER  
Aberdeen

Sir: From different reports in your coverage of the Dunblane tragedy (15 March) I quote two paragraphs.

"Police told the Scottish Secretary privately that they had concerns over Hamilton, but did not have enough evidence to prosecute."

"Last year, Central Scotland Police gave Hamilton a firearms certificate for a 9mm pistol and a .375 revolver, and at the same time, authorised him to buy two more similar weapons."

Is this the same police?

MICHAEL GREEN  
Wokingham, Berkshire

Sir: I was disgusted to read in Colin Brown's report (16 March) that "senior Conservative Party figures were dismayed at John Major's joint visit with Tony Blair to the area [Dunblane]" and that "Conservative sources were furious because they felt it gave Mr Blair a political bonus". Can these Conservatives be named, so that they may be for ever vilified by decent British citizens of all parties?

JOHN CRISP  
London SW1

### Save Baltics from Russian power

Sir: The present discussion on spheres of influence in Europe ("Silk Curtain" cuts Europe in two once more, 16 March) strikes the Baltic states with horror and trepidation. Under no circumstances should the West agree to the creation of any artificial boundaries in Europe to placate Russia's military. This would only encourage the non-democratic elements in Russia to demand further increases in their sphere of influence.

It is not Russia's prerogative to dictate to nations how they should evolve and it would be much better for her to seek solutions to her own deep internal problems.

Between the wars, at the time of their independence, the Baltic peoples achieved remarkable prosperity, which was lost during Soviet rule. They must have the right to decide on their own whether or not to join the EU or Nato.

PETERIS TERMANIS  
London SW16

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax 0171-293 2456; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### New jobs for old NHS chiefs

Sir: I see that we, the taxpayers, can expect a bill approaching £1m for buying surplus senior NHS executives out of their contracts. Surely there is a better way.

One possibility is some form of training, to equip them to do a better managerial job in future in the NHS. Ideally I would suggest they work out their contracts as hospital porters - a post from which they will see the realities of the NHS with new eyes. Sadly, they would probably argue that this constitutes constructive dismissal.

Alternatively, they should be

formed into a committee with the remit of negotiating for people in their position to leave the NHS with no more than six months' pay in lieu of notice. They would be dealing with their peers, and could hardly deny that this is a challenging task. It should be clearly understood that failure to reach such an agreement within three months would be indicative of incompetence to hold office at their level, and render them liable for dismissal without notice.

Dr A M HULME  
Sutton Coldfield,  
West Midlands

### No point in technology at school

Sir: Mike Heath, Director General of the Engineering Council, believes that teaching technology in Britain's schools will improve our engineering base, on which he feels our economy depends (Letters, 16 March).

I understand that there is a looming crisis in the health service due to a predicted shortage of GPs. Does Mr Heath feel we should be teaching our children how to diagnose illness and prescribe treatments?

As an engineer myself, I know

that the foundation of all the engineering disciplines is science and mathematics. Until adequate standards in these subjects are achieved in our schools it is absurd to attempt to teach children the vocational subjects that depend on them. The place for vocational teaching is in colleges and universities. Even these cannot succeed unless students arrive from the school system adequately prepared.

IAN QUAYLE  
Helensburgh, Strathclyde

### One nation in front of the TV

Sir: Jeffrey Richards asserts ("BBC's voice of two nations", 13 March) that the success of two apparently different BBC dramas, the gritty *Our Friends in the North* and the romantic *Pride and Prejudice*, points to a country with polarised tastes and attitudes. He looks back to the Fifties and a Reithian BBC which "cemented the nation with a unitary voice".

It is not far-fetched to maintain that a broadcasting monopoly could happily bond a class-ridden society made up of avaricious consumers, jealous trade unionists and angry teddy-boys? The Fifties reality, of course, was an unhappy compromise of viewers completely unspoilt for choice and sitting around what were often BBC-only television sets watching programmes of little interest.

Were the audience profiles for *Our Friends* and *Pride and Prejudice* that different? Both were historical dramas; one began with sex and the promise of more to come, the other captivated viewers with the eventuality of sex. I suggest that far more viewers than Professor Richards might imagine were riveted to both.

GEORGE FISHER  
Broughton, Cumbria

### Train beats car

Sir: For some twenty-five years as commuter I have driven the 20 miles to central London and each year the queues get longer and the serious incidents more regular and it becomes necessary to leave that few minutes earlier to avoid this distance taking up to an hour and a half.

Until now, I have discovered the train, a fast and efficient chariot galloping across the countryside and trotting through the suburbs to decant me within the Square Mile unfettered and content.

The only drawback is the expense. Even against my thirsty limousine, it is more than twice the cost. There must be a case for the Government to subsidise public transport, to help the environment and massage our tempers.

F WILSON  
Broxbourne, Hertfordshire

### Employment law out of date

Sir: Dr John McMullen is right to remind us that unfair dismissal protection was introduced to offer people a "civilised" way of dealing with a problem, rather than through industrial action ("Size really doesn't matter to workers", 13 March).

Removing employment rights from millions of people cannot be the best way of relieving job insecurity, or producing a "feel-good factor". The consequences for social cohesion, when firms are able to generate rising profits with fewer people, have not yet been fully explored. Working arrangements are increasingly so diverse and flexible that the time has clearly come for a fundamental review of employment legislation.

TONY MORGAN  
Chief Executive  
The Industrial Society,  
London W1

### Fighting flab?

Sir: Your report on the "disease" of obesity (13 March) describes the Body Mass Index (weight in kilos divided by height in metres squared) and says a person with an index over 25 is considered overweight, and over 30 obese.

For the Bruno/Tyson fight on Saturday, Bruno weighed in at 111 kilos with a height of 1.91 metres - an index of 30.43. Tyson, too, has an index above 30. Are these superb athletes obese? Clearly other factors are important in making medical judgments about body weight.

CHARLES LOVING  
Newport, Isle of Wight

### Reclaim cities

Sir: Our town and city centres already have too many shops and offices ("The one-stop shop comes one step closer", 15 March). The current business exodus gives an excellent opportunity to return the centres to their proper role - a place for people to live, not just to visit between 9am and 5pm.

LEN PARRICK  
Leeds



# Paddy's libertarian mission

The Lib Dem leader's speech, which scorns the puritanical zeal of new Labour, is a breath of fresh air

**N**ews flash: an interesting political speech was made at the weekend. Deflating second flash: it was made by Paddy Ashdown. This is deflating not because Ashdown is a secondary figure at Westminster, though he is, but because he has made some interesting speeches before; indeed, being "interesting" is one of the Liberal Democrat leader's more dangerous hobbies.

He is treated atrociously by the political elite - mocked, sneered at, never taken seriously. The other parties mean outspoke, disdainful and insufficiently respectful of their authority.

And indeed, he is in many ways more like a politician except that he, unlike us, goes round the country talking to people. He saturates himself in the anti-Westminster atmosphere. His wife once told me that she had been rung up late at night by the Liverpool police to warn her that somebody was impersonating her husband, loitering in a dangerous and drug-infested area of the city with a crowd of Rastafarians. "That's my Paddy," she instantly replied.

But his very isolation from the main currents of Westminster has enabled Ashdown to think widely and speak with rare freedom. His weekend speech was typical of his best in being thought through, vivid, provocative and even, in key parts, plausible (thus breaking every important rule of contemporary political rhetoric).

Briefly put, it started with the familiar thought that globalisation and individualism had between them changed our world. The old model of politics, by which "governments could, by and

large, deliver what their people wanted; and so people, by and large, believed in government" was being destroyed.

But, whereas most politicians adopt a mournful or reactionary posture when confronting this thought, Ashdown sounded positively chipper. "The age of deference, if not quite dead, is dying on its feet. And the age of the individual is coming along famously. We're seeing the beginning of the end of the politics of class and nation."

The Conservatives, he said, were responding to globalisation by trying to make Britain ever more free-market, a smaller version of the United States, with its ghettos and widening social rifts. Labour was trying to create a new "state-sponsored morality" to rebuild Britain in the image of Singapore. The real answer, however, was a politics based round "self-reliant individuals", a politics of education, reform and tolerance.

Thus far, the speech pursued traditional Liberal tactics, painting the two big parties as extreme, and proposing a "sensible" middle-of-the-road alternative. However, when Ashdown listed the policies his individualist party was actually committed to, they sounded identical to new Labour's. On education, support for small business, long-term investment, welfare reform, constitutional change, this was a speech that could have been made by Tony Blair.

It was only when he turned to morality and power that Ashdown sounded a truly different note, laying savagely into Jack Straw's censorious approach to idlers, sturdy beggars and other undesirables.



ANDREW MARR

Ashdown seems intent on becoming 'differently popular'

The emphasis on people's responsibilities, rather than their rights, begins well enough, he said. "But it ends by telling people how to live their lives - by limiting freedom of speech, by spot fines for chewing gum and neglecting to pull the lavatory chain. It ends in policies which punish the sinner but ignore the sin."

Attacking new Labour's illiberal streak would be less impressive, had Ashdown not marked his party out by taking some brave specific stands, notably on gays in the military. This is unlikely to do him any electoral good. But, as on drugs, censorship, civil liberties and other issues, the Liberal Democrats here show themselves genuinely principled.

We don't yet have a word for it, but there is a code that reverses some traditional teaching, yet is clear and principled itself. It abhors homophobia rather than homosexuality. It

rejects beliefs about women, racial differences, Hell and sin that underpin Judeo-Christian teaching. It is "liberal" in a way that owes more to Bloomsbury and Martin Luther King than Gladstone or Adam Smith.

More than economics, voting reform or localism this provides the core belief-system of the Liberal Democrats. Ashdown spoke of a society that would "encourage diversity... be heedless of gender or sexual orientation. It will celebrate experimentation. And it will value pluralism and the wide richness of ethnic traditions and cultures in Britain today." New Labour would agree, in principle, yet never use those words. That is not the enthusiasm of the communarians and social moralists of the left, searching for security in a turbulent world.

There is an important division opening in politics between freedom and security, between those who stress rights and those who stress duty. It is not a normal left-right division. It zig-zags through the Labour Party and through the Conservatives. Both have libertarians and moralists in their ranks.

It fractures the uncommitted majority of thinking society, too. It is very much a thing of our uncertain, harassed times. It could be caricatured as the dividing line between people who enjoy Tarantino films and people who worry about them, or between natural born rebels and natural magistrates.

And the rebels have cast Blair and Jack Straw as the villains of the drama, puritans whose instincts are as authoritarian as Oliver Cromwell's. At one

level, Ashdown's speech could be summarised as "the Lib Dems equal Labour minus Straw".

In fact, both Straw and new Labour generally are about much more than populism. There is a wider yearning for security, order and greater social trust that is felt on the streets and preached by economists, think-tanks and intellectuals. It is not the centrally imposed morality that Ashdown attacks, but it certainly is a response to his twin forces of globalisation and individualism.

And the Liberal Democrats are against it. After their Nottingham conference they look ever more like the libertarian party in British politics. This is probably a niche market, but it is a very important niche for someone to stand in.

As a bit of a puritan myself, I am glad that Ashdown is standing there. We are undergoing that dreary narrowing of the political agenda that precedes a general election and he is a cheering addition to the game. At least some of what he says doesn't seem calculated for party advantage. Indeed, after Nottingham, he seems intent on becoming, in the appropriate jargon of political correctness, "differently popular".

And if a Labour government ever was dependent on Ashdown votes, we know what sort of influence he'd aspire to be - in the darkest watches of the night and the darkest corners of Whitehall he would be a safeguard against illiberalism or authoritarianism. These days, the Labour left worries desperately about the prospect of having to share power with the Lib Dems. I really can't see why.

## Censored: the V-chip's real aim

Julian Petley suspects that supporters of a device to screen out TV violence have a hidden agenda

**A**t first sight the V-chip, which is being promoted by the Government as the answer to TV violence, looks like rather a good idea. Parents with their fingers on the electronic key would be able to protect their children from programmes that might disturb them, while they themselves would retain the ability to watch more "adult" material.

This way, we are saved from the television diet recommended by those politicians, such as Roger Gale, chair of the Conservative backbench media committee, in which nothing would be allowed on at any time that might disturb any child who might be watching. But would it work like that? I doubt it.

If we're concerned with irresponsible parents who let their children watch unsuitable television programmes, why should we suppose that they are going to discover a sense of responsibility towards their children when they acquire a new television fitted with this gizmo? Also, as it is a statistical fact that more children than adults can work video recorders, we can't be at all sure that some of them won't find ways of subverting the chip. Indeed, I can imagine some techno-brats fixing it so that it's the parents who can't watch their favourite programme if it clashes with their offspring's choice on another channel.

Next, who's going to work out the rating system on which the effectiveness of the chip will depend? Different verdicts are sometimes handed out on the same programmes by the Broadcasting Standards Council, the BBC Programme Complaints Unit and the Independent Television Commission. There is no consensus on the standards and values that would have to form the basis for any such rating system. And even if such a consensus could be forged among the terrestrial broadcasters, would the satellite broadcasters agree to it? The movie channels, for example, argue that their encrypted signal enables them to broadcast "stronger" versions of certain films that are shown cut on BBC, ITV or C4.

Satellite television is part of the internationalisation of broadcasting, which is why the EU is also considering introducing V-chips. Would any British ratings system have to be harmonised with a possible European one? This would present considerable problems, since most of our continental neighbours are far less troubled about what is shown on their

television screens than we are about ours, and they are most certainly not going to be swayed by what they regard as Anglo-Saxon puritanism. It would indeed be ironic if, thanks to the proponents of the chip, Britain was eventually forced to accept a more, as opposed to less, liberal regime of television regulation.

Finally, what do the chip's supporters really want? The Liberal Democrat MP David Alton said yesterday that he intended to put down a V-chip amendment to the Broadcasting Bill if the Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, did not decide to legislate, and added that a number of Tory

Techno-brats will fix it so parents can't watch their TV favourites

MPs had promised him their support.

But does he want a world where children are protected from disturbing images while adults sit around happily watching "stronger" stuff, safe in the knowledge that the satisfaction of their pleasures isn't causing distress elsewhere? I don't think so. It was Mr Alton who spearheaded the campaign in 1994 to make video censorship, already among the toughest in the world, even more stringent.

The lobby group Movement for Christian Democracy, of which Mr Alton is a member, congratulated itself on its "campaign triumph in video battle", and added that "the victory on violent videos is the first battle in a continuing campaign". Now the V-chip presents the campaign with an opportunity to do battle again.

By all means let's have a sensible debate about the V-chip. But let's have all the cards on the table please. If some of the proponents of the chip are trying to use this issue as a way of advancing their own, very particular agenda, let us know about it. And if their real object is not simply the protection of children but the diminution of what adults may see on television, then let's hear it loud and clear.

The writer, who lectures in communication studies at Brunel University, is co-editing a book on how the media influences people, to be published by Routledge later this year.

## Big Brother buys our loyalty

Shopping smart cards are being used to gather information on our personal lives. Do we care?

**M**y life has changed. I am known as never before. My movements and habits are tracked, implicated, counted. Electronically, I am watched by British Airways, BT, Shell, the National Westminster Bank, even, weirdly, by John Menzies.

These companies have bought my acquiescence in this surveillance by offering me the magic of Air Miles. Soothingly, respectfully they say: look, you buy petrol, make phone calls or use credit cards anyway, so why not use ours? It's a painless, cost-free decision and, to reward you for making it, we will give you free air travel, the supreme luxury of the modern world.

How could I resist? Anything other than Shell petrol is now unthinkable



BRYAN APPLEYARD

and my Visa and American Express cards languish unused in my wallet. For the moment I can think of nothing I wish to buy at John Menzies, but I will.

This is all, of course, made possible by information technology. I do almost nothing new, yet quantum physics and silicon chips ensure that the things I habitually do are automatically logged and rewarded. We note this newly discovered phenomenon of your loyalty, say the companies, and electronically, we embrace you, we love you.

And loyalty is what they call it, even though I have, in reality, been bribed and feel no moral or emotional commitment to Shell, as opposed to BP, NatWest as opposed to Amex. I'm just in it for the Miles.

But the companies don't mind; loyalty to them means only mindless repetition, they require no movement of my soul, no careful consumer assessment of their goods.

Loyalty marketing - sometimes called, even more intimately, "relationship marketing" - is the Big New Thing in corporate thinking. It has begun to infect almost every transaction down to the most fleeting. Buy a coffee these days and the café will probably offer you 10p off the next latte or cappuccino, just to make you, in commercial terms, "loyal".

But the real loyalty action is happening in the big corporate computer databases. These have given companies the power not just to know people, in general, but people in particular. Take up Tesco's loyalty card and



somebody at head office will know exactly what you buy; idly allow yourself to be hooked into Heinz's system and you will receive a magazine specifically edited to respond to your personal buying patterns.

The first effect of this new power is to expose the appalling inefficiency of traditional advertising. However big a brand - Coca-Cola, Guinness, Heinz Baked Beans, whatever - the reality is that it is actually bought by only a small minority of the total population. Yet the usual advertising approach is to shout at, cajole or wheedle everybody. Inevitably, any such ad will be wasted on the overwhelming majority of its audience. But relationship marketing is a magic bullet that targets only those who are

genuinely likely to buy or have already bought.

It is also a way of getting round one awkward fact of modern life: most of the stuff we buy is so utterly banal and undifferentiated that ordinary advertising has lost its persuasive power. This even applies to something as apparently exciting as a car. Consider the two TV campaigns now running for the Peugeot 406 and the Vauxhall Vectra. The first suggests that the 406 will help you to "search for the hero inside yourself" and the second implies that the Vectra is a futuristic, sci-fi vehicle miraculously available now. Yet both are utterly dull mid-range saloons, indistinguishable from the competition. The rhetoric of these fabulously outdated, hugely incom-

petent ads looks absurd. We care for neither car since we know the claims to be meaningless.

Clearly, traditional advertising will continue. The Peugeot and Vauxhall ads may make dealers feel good and may provide some rather tenuous reinforcement for people who have bought one of these bland runabouts. But on the whole, it will have to change. The big traditional branding successes of recent years - Nike, Orange, Tango, Microsoft - have been based on a deliberate avoidance of such crudity. Instead, they appeal to the young and zany (Tango), the seeker after authenticity (Nike), the globalised loner (Orange) or the technologically anxious (Microsoft). These are personalities that appear true

because they are so contemporary, they refer to the Nineties sense of being part of yet also alienated from the economic system.

But relationship marketing will be where the real selling happens in the future. For not only does it work, but, strangely, we love it. This is strange because, in fact, its connotations are rather sinister. It depends, above all, on our willingness to allow ourselves to be watched, to let the details of our lives be logged on computers far beyond our control. Twenty years ago we would have recoiled in horror at the idea; it would have seemed such an assault on our freedom and privacy. Yet now it seems obvious, routine, clearly desirable.

This movement towards accep-

The technological culture is not a nightmare but a welcome convenience

tance of the wired culture is a general phenomenon. Once the idea of surveillance cameras on street corners would have seemed an outrage. Now it is accepted as a commonsense measure against crime and terrorism. The technological culture, in which our lives are examined, cross-referenced and used by agencies and in ways of which we know nothing, is not, it seems, a nightmare but a welcome convenience.

This has happened, I think, because we have all become technological determinists. All this is going to happen whatever we say or do, so resistance is pointless. The qualms of 1984 or Brave New World seem like the remote, futile anxieties of another culture. The electronic system, the Net with its fabulous appetite for personal detail, is here whether we like it or not. What choice do we have but to accept its presence, to co-operate with its exotic system of goods and rewards?

At a deeper level, I think we also find all this consoling. The systems that lock us into these networks of companies, even the system that watches our movements on the street, feel friendly. When I buy my Shell and collect my Miles, somebody or something recognises me. Mad as it may seem, I accept the mercenary flattery. We all do because for that moment it feels better than the usual blank impersonality of the wired world.

But then the Orwellian conscience kicks in. Where is all this information going? What awful correlations is it generating? And do I care enough to stop collecting Air Miles?

convention, Britain among them, believe that it is better to be pragmatic and get the many non-members to sign up to the limits set out by the convention than to call for a total ban. However, a clarion call for an outright ban, as a stated long-term objective, may bring in support for the more limited measures and lead to a speedier advance in the laws of armed conflict.

The major military powers must take the lead, as they have done on export moratoria, if they are to reduce the awful consequences of this weapon's misuse.

Col Terence Taylor is assistant director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. These are his personal views.

## Land-mines are everyone's enemy

ANOTHER VIEW

Terence Taylor

he is now inclined to support a total ban on anti-personnel mines. His statement echoed the view of many countries and the Red Cross.

Until now the US and the UK have taken a more measured approach by halting exports and seeking to strengthen legal controls regulating the use of mines. But this may not be enough to galvanise international action to deal effectively with a problem that worsens by the day.

Mines continue to be laid in large numbers. About half of those injured die of their injuries, while most of the

survivors lose one or more limbs. In most of the conflict areas, specialised treatment and artificial limbs are not available. The casualties become a burden on their families. Whole communities are prevented from working their agricultural land.

But the strongest case against these weapons lies in their indiscriminate

nature. The overwhelming majority of them remain in place long after their military purpose is over: most victims are in the end non-combatants, placing these weapons in a class apart from other conventional weapons.

There is an ongoing review of the UN Convention, which sets rules on the use of mines. One proposal is to allow the use only of mines that self-destruct within a set period after being laid. Another is to permit only mines that can be detected by available mine-clearing technologies.

A number of the 57 parties to the

If you sponsor Shomita,



no one will have to sponsor her children

Little Shomita is just six years old and the only life she's known is one of hunger, poverty and disease. But by the time she has children of her own, this could be a very different story.

It could be one about families, about villages working together to earn their own living. About children who can read and write and have a future. About a community that can treat the sick and is free from fatal diseases. And if it is, it is because you care enough to sponsor a child.

In return, we'll keep you in touch with regular reports from our field workers plus a photograph and messages from the child you sponsor.

Please sponsor a child today. With your help, we really can change the future.

Please sponsor a child today.

Please send me details about sponsoring a child, or call 01480 61073.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Where there's a parent there's a child

☐ I can't sponsor a child now, but would like a gift set

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No

Use spaces for postal to ACTIONAID and postal to ACTIONAID

50565 Child Sponsor 7/2/96

16561

ACTIONAID

ACTIONAID



## Bad news continues as BAT tries to reassure investors

DAVID USBORNE  
New York  
TOM STEVENSON  
London

A flood of bad news from around the world continued to dog BAT yesterday even as a hastily convened analysts and investors meeting in London was being reassured about the impact of a landmark legal settlement by US tobacco rival Liggett last week.

Brown and Williamson, BAT's US-based subsidiary, is under investigation by a federal grand jury over claims that it knew about an operation to smuggle its cigarettes into Canada to avoid Canadian taxes.

In a separate development in India, BAT was also hit yesterday by an unexpectedly harsh court order forcing its 32 per cent Indian subsidiary ITC to deposit 3.5bn rupees (\$101m) pending an appeal against an 8bn rupee fine for tax evasion.

As this bad news flowed in, industry watchers in London were told by a BAT lawyer that Liggett's settlement of a US class action, which alleged that tobacco companies deliberately manipulated nicotine levels in cigarettes to encourage addiction, would not change the state of its own litigation.

The Liggett settlement had sent tobacco company share prices plunging last week as investors feared that the industry's long-maintained united front against legal attacks had started to crumble. BAT fell further yesterday, closing down 12p at 488p.

The lawyer restated BAT's view that the Liggett settlement was simply a sideshow in an attempt by Liggett's controlling shareholder, Bennett LeBow, to gain control of the second largest American cigarette maker RJR Nabisco.

The latest US probe, which could result in the filing of criminal charges against Brown and Williamson executives, is one of five grand jury investigations into the tobacco industry currently being pursued under the auspices of the US Justice Department, the *New York Times* said yesterday.

The newspaper reported that the five investigations could lead to jail terms for some of the industry's most senior executives and that several of them had already taken steps to hire high-priced criminal defence lawyers. The sense of siege among the cigarette manufacturers was also compounded by a separate report in the *Wall Street Journal* that a former scientist at Philip Morris, the US's largest cigarette maker, had testified that the company knew about the addictive qualities of nicotine and manipulated nicotine levels.

## Merging societies may get protection from predators

JOHN EISENHAMMER  
Financial Editor

The Government sought yesterday to kick-start mergers in the beleaguered building society movement by proposing restrictions on hostile takeovers. Presenting the draft Bill on building societies, Angela Knight, the Treasury Minister, suggested ring-fencing societies which have decided to merge against outside bids for up to a year.



Angela Knight: Proposals to restrict hostile takeovers

"We want to make sure that building societies feel they can continue to do their traditional mergers. At the moment they feel this not to be practical, because as soon as they announce a merger, they get into the firing line for a predatory takeover," she said.

The Government will be looking for responses from the market to its suggestions and the draft legislation, over the coming three months. Introducing the Bill, Mrs Knight, who described herself as a "fan of building societies", said it aimed to provide a permissive legal framework instead of the prescriptive legislation that currently governs the movement. "I think what the Bill does is ensure building societies have a level playing field, and can do more while remaining mutual," she said.

The need for reform has been pointed up by a recent rush to convert, which has seen three of the four biggest building societies announce their intention to float on the Stock Exchange next year. When the Halifax/Leeds



Peter White: The decision to move out of estate agency comes as part of a cleaning-up process before flotation

## A&L pulls out of estate agency

JOHN EISENHAMMER  
Financial Editor

The Alliance & Leicester building society said yesterday it was pulling out of the estate agency business, and announced a £40m write-off that took the wind out of profits. Peter White, chief executive, said he hoped to have sold or closed the 70 agencies by late summer.

"There was no way we were going to make money out of it. We just had to take a tough decision," he said.

The decision to get out of estate agency is part of the process of cleaning up the balance sheet for A&L's planned flotation on the stock market next spring. The goodwill in the chain, con-

centrated in East Anglia and the east Midlands, is £25m, with a further £15m coming from redundancy and closure costs.

The write-off held pre-tax profits last year virtually flat at £287m, as A&L faced very tough conditions in two of its core business markets: home loans and Girobank, the group's corporate banking side. The mortgage market became increasingly competitive in 1995, with a wider range of discounts, fixed rates and special offers than ever before.

A&L achieved its highest-ever market share of total UK net mortgage advances at 8.2 per cent, as against its "normal" share by market weighting of 5 per cent. But Mr White con-

ceded that earnings on this increased share were slim. "The margins are very tight on new business. But we do not launch anything that does not make a profit," he said.

Girobank, which is the country's biggest telephone banking operation, was also operating under "very tough conditions", he said. The personal banking sector fared the best, with a 57 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £63m. But Girobank's corporate money transfer business saw profits inch up to £66m from £63m in 1994.

Easing the pain of the estate agency write-off to some extent was an unexpectedly sharp drop in the bad debt provision to just £3m, from £29m in 1994.

"These are the lowest bad debts we have had for a long time, thanks to recoveries of commercial loans previously written off," said Richard Pym, group finance director. The cut in bad debt provisions accounted for much of the 15 per cent increase in group pre-tax operating profits to £327m.

"Overall, the results are below expectations. Even though the improvement in bad debts is extremely good, it means on an operating level the profit growth has been small," said Rob Thomas, analyst at UBS.

Unlike most building societies, 40 per cent of Alliance profits are from non-traditional activities. This is one reason why it is anxious to gain bank status.

## 'Buyers back' in housing market

The new year recovery in the housing market continued last month, with nearly three quarters of estate agents reporting higher activity, writes Diane Coyle. Buyers have been encouraged by interest rate cuts and excellent mortgage deals, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Its regular survey of members for the three months to February found 62.6 per cent reporting an increase in business of up to 10 per cent, while nearly one in eight said activity had grown by 25-50 per cent. Only 5 per cent reported a decrease compared with three months earlier.

Prices were flat, however. More than four fifths of the estate agents said selling prices were the same as three months ago. The survey commented that recovery was in danger of being held back by sellers who had been encouraged by positive reports and decided to hold out for a better price.

David Baker, an estate agent in Penarth, near Cardiff, said: "There is definitely more activity but let us not get carried away with the thought that prices will rise. There is a lot of slack to be taken up first."

Denis Chapman in Scarborough, described the market as "still very patchy with only the realistically-priced properties finding purchasers."

John Pocock of Pocock and Shaw in Cambridge was more optimistic: "Houses generally are proving to be much more readily saleable and the situation appears to be better than any time in the past 12 months."

groups:  
Pearson takeover after mixe

## PSBR heads towards £3bn overshoot

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Editor

Government borrowing is likely to be £2bn to £3bn over target this financial year, limiting Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's scope for tax cuts in the next budget.

The most serious slippage in the public sector finances is alarmingly slow growth in government revenues. Tax receipts are likely to be up to £2bn lower than forecast at the time of last November's budget - and £7bn lower than the level predicted in the previous budget.

Spending by Whitehall is also running ahead of plans and could overshoot by about £1bn, unless some expenditure can be clawed back successfully this month. This could be difficult in a month when departments have usually rushed to spend as much as possible before the year-end.

Andrew Smith, shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said: "Public borrowing is still running at a very high level, reflecting weakness rather than strength in the economy."

The Treasury said borrowing remained on a downward trend, a conclusion backed by most

City analysts. "There is now some clear improvement in the public finances this year compared to last," said Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe.

However, many thought future borrowing would also overshoot the Budget plans, thanks to tax cuts announced last November taking effect and the 4 per cent pay awards in the public sector. Kevin Darlington at Hoare Govett said borrowing would continue to shrink but would remain above the Maas-tricht ceiling of 3 per cent of GDP.

The gap between government revenues and spending was £3bn in February, the last but one month of the financial year. It would have been higher, except for an unexpected £1.5bn in privatisation receipts from BAA shares, electricity company bonds and the second part of the Geneco sale.

Revenues have increased 9 per cent this financial year, compared to a Budget forecast of 9.6 per cent for the full year. Lower inflation has led to slower revenue growth. VAT receipts account for much of the

shortfall, possibly due to lower spending on consumer goods liable for VAT.

Spending was up 4.3 per cent in the 11 months to February, above the Budget forecast of 3.8 per cent for the year as a whole.

Debt interest payments have been higher than expected, at £21.5bn since last April compared to £19.1bn at the same stage last financial year. Local authorities are also likely to be in the red. They made a monthly debt repayment of £757m in February, and have repaid £0.5bn in 11 months. However,

they have borrowed £1.6bn on average every March to use up the remainder of their annual budget. If the pattern is normal this year, they are unlikely to meet the target of a £0.1bn debt repayment for the full year.

Economists said that on last month's trends, the full-year Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) would be £31-32bn, compared with a target of £29bn set in the November budget. This is much smaller than the Treasury's average £11bn error in forecasting the next year's PSBR.

## Juppé abandons plan to sell off France Telecom

MARY FAGAN  
and MARY DEJEVSKY

The French government has abandoned the privatisation of France Telecom, the monopoly telephone network operator, in an apparent attempt to appease trade unions and employees.

Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, ended months of speculation by saying that the company's statute would be changed to ensure the elimination of competition when the European telecommunications market is opened up on 1 January 1998, but that it would remain in state control.

Mr Juppé said that the state would retain a majority stake in France Telecom with employees preserving their status as public employees and the benefits of secure employment and pensions.

However, the government angered one of the main trade unions, Force Ouvrière, by accepting the principle of an independent regulatory authority outside both France Telecom and the government.

The independence and strength of the regulator has been of great concern to BT and other operators who wish to compete in French public telephony. A spokesman for BT said: "It is also important that there should be the appropriate pro-competition law in place."

Mr Juppé said that France Telecom would be required to evolve to compete "on an equal footing with its competitors" - and that a Bill ensuring the necessary changes would be laid before the French parliament this spring.

The decision to stop short of wholesale privatisation will be seen as a blow to François Fillon, the minister of post and telecommunications, who had called for rapid sell-off. The cautious wording of the statement appeared to reflect the French government's concern not to provoke a repetition of events last November, when

plans to restructure the state railway company, SNCF, and alter public sector pension arrangements, sparked off four weeks of strikes and protests and paralysed the national rail network. As part of the price of a return to work, the government had to abandon the whole SNCF restructuring plan.

A recent report from the prime minister's office found that the "special status" of France's public sector was not incompatible with EU deregulation. However, it remains unclear whether privatisation has been ruled out completely or merely postponed for the foreseeable future.

There is also uncertainty as to whether the pledge to preserve the public service status of employees will extend to those recruited after the law is changed.

GEC confir



## George defends Bank's policy

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, defended the Bank yesterday against the charge that it is "congenitally pessimistic", writes Diane Coyle. The Bank had to err slightly on the side of caution, he said, "in order to build up policy credibility against the background of the UK's unhappy track record."

It had also been less over-optimistic about inflation than many other forecasters, he said in a speech to the Swedish

Economics Association. Critics were wrong to conclude that the Bank wanted to bias the economy towards deflation.

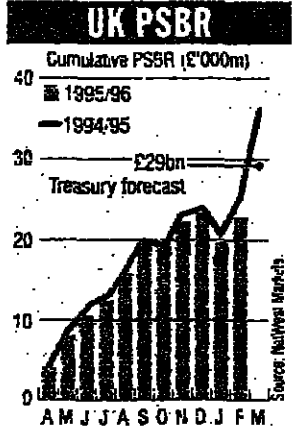
Mr George added that the Bank's concern with the control of inflation was, "as a means to the end of sustained growth in activity and employment."

The current state of demand did not, the Bank's calculations showed, justify its inflation forecast, but this was an uncertain process.

The Governor conceded that

the fact that most people think forecasts are either right or wrong meant setting interest rates according to forecasts of the economy two years hence could "weaken the operational credibility of policy". The Bank could not afford to consistently overdo its caution.

Despite these difficulties, the inflation target was better than the alternative. Shadowing and then joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism had been a "disaster" in his view.



# STOCK MARKETS

**FTSE 100**

**Dow Jones\***

**Nikkei**

**Hang Seng**

\*Dow Jones index at 3:00 PM EST

FTSE 100 Index Data (Estimated):

Date	Index Value
1999-01-01	3500
1999-03-01	3600
1999-05-01	3700
1999-07-01	3800
1999-09-01	3900
1999-11-01	4000
2000-01-01	3900
2000-03-01	3800
2000-05-01	3700
2000-07-01	3600
2000-09-01	3500
2000-11-01	3400
2001-01-01	3300

Dow Jones Index Data (Estimated):

Date	Index Value
1999-01-01	7000
1999-03-01	7100
1999-05-01	7200
1999-07-01	7300
1999-09-01	7400
1999-11-01	7500
2000-01-01	7600
2000-03-01	7700
2000-05-01	7800
2000-07-01	7900
2000-09-01	8000
2000-11-01	8100
2001-01-01	8200

Nikkei Index Data (Estimated):

Date	Index Value
1999-01-01	19000
1999-03-01	19500
1999-05-01	20000
1999-07-01	20500
1999-09-01	21000
1999-11-01	21500
2000-01-01	21000
2000-03-01	20500
2000-05-01	20000
2000-07-01	19500
2000-09-01	19000
2000-11-01	18500
2001-01-01	18000

Hang Seng Index Data (Estimated):

Date	Index Value
1999-01-01	10000
1999-03-01	10500
1999-05-01	11000
1999-07-01	11500
1999-09-01	12000
1999-11-01	12500
2000-01-01	12000
2000-03-01	11500
2000-05-01	11000
2000-07-01	10500
2000-09-01	10000
2000-11-01	9500
2001-01-01	9000

Indices	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	3668.60	+24.80	+0.7	3781.30	2954.29	4.04
FTSE 250	4244.50	+17.30	+0.4	4280.00	3300.96	3.48
FTSE 350	1844.20	+11.40	+0.6	1889.00	1462.40	2.92
FT Small Cap	2070.31	+3.39	+0.2	2076.11	1674.61	3.06
FT All Share	1823.79	+10.61	+0.6	1864.55	1569.23	3.85
Hang Seng	5633.03	+48.06	+0.9	5642.42	3832.08	2.15
Tokyo	20265.13	+94.28	+0.5	21118.30	14485.40	0.77
Hang Kong	10601.28	+43.70	+0.4	111194.48	6967.83	3.48
Frankfurt	2463.16	+4.93	+0.2	2501.22	1910.96	1.94

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium term		US long bond		Money Market Rates		Bond Yields	
Rate	1 Month	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Month	Rate	1 Year
UK	5.94	6.34	5.11	6.55	6.12	3.00	3.00	5.94	6.34
US	5.34	5.99	6.41	7.12	7.11	3.00	3.00	5.34	5.99
Japan	0.12	0.53	3.19	3.19	3.19	3.00	3.00	0.12	0.53
Germany	5.34	3.41	6.54	7.12	7.11	3.00	3.00	5.34	5.99

CURRENCIES

The figure consists of three line charts, each showing a currency exchange rate over time from 1980 to 1984. Each chart has a vertical axis representing the rate and a horizontal axis representing time in years. A solid line represents the daily or periodic exchange rate, while a dashed line represents a trend or moving average.

- £/\$ Chart:** The vertical axis ranges from 1.50 to 1.75. The rate starts at approximately 1.53 in 1980, rises to about 1.60 in 1981, dips to 1.55 in 1982, and then fluctuates between 1.60 and 1.65 through 1984. The trend line shows a general upward movement from 1980 to 1982, followed by a slight decline and then a plateau.
- £/DM Chart:** The vertical axis ranges from 2.15 to 2.35. The rate starts at approximately 2.29 in 1980, rises to about 2.32 in 1981, dips to 2.25 in 1982, and then fluctuates between 2.25 and 2.30 through 1984. The trend line shows a general upward movement from 1980 to 1982, followed by a slight decline and then a plateau.
- £/¥ Chart:** The vertical axis ranges from 150 to 165. The rate starts at approximately 153 in 1980, rises to about 158 in 1981, dips to 155 in 1982, and then fluctuates between 155 and 160 through 1984. The trend line shows a general upward movement from 1980 to 1982, followed by a slight decline and then a plateau.

Source: Bank of International Settlements and IMF Board Map of 1980 Rates

Pound

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	1.5317	+0.79c	1.582
£ (NY)	1.5305	+0.95c	1.5765
DM (London)	2.2540	+0.88pf	2.2105
DM (London)	162.370	+0.939	141.586
Index	93.6	+0.2	64.6

Dollar

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	0.6529	-0.34	0.632
£ (NY)	0.6531	-0.23	0.634
DM (London)	1.4732	-0.78pf	1.3973
£ (London)	106.010	+0.11	98.425
Index	95.5	-0.2	90.8

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's Change	Year Ago	Index	Latent	Yr Ago	Next Days
Oil Brent \$	12.83	+0.02	16.75	RPI	150.2	146.0	21 Mar
Gold \$	394.54	-1.00	392.50	GDP	107.1	105.1	26 Mar
Silver \$	257.75	-2.00	241.44	Base Rates	—	6.00pc	6.75

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SkypePharm is a leading provider of pharmaceutical products and services. We offer a wide range of products and services to meet your needs.





## COMMENT

Takeover rules are usually designed to protect the rights of investors, but Angela Knight's half-baked suggestion appears, by contrast, designed more to protect building society directors'

# Muddled thinking in the building societies Bill

There is something false and hypocritical about the Government's sudden concern for that endangered species, the building society. Belatedly and half-heartedly, the Government seems to have decided there is something worth protecting in the mutually owned building society tradition. Even as a piece of well-meant conservation, however, the building societies Bill looks a masterpiece of muddled thinking and irrelevance.

Certainly the Government's "Mutuality for the next Millennium" proposals might better have been presented by Virginia Bottomley than Angela Knight. As Heritage Secretary, Mrs Bottomley is at least meant to tend those threatened corners that everyone wants to keep forever England. Given the alarming rate at which societies have been abandoning mutuality and opting for conversion to quoted company status, the Heritage Secretary's time may yet come.

For the moment, though, it is Angela Knight at the Treasury who is hoping to hold back the tide by offering societies which soldier on a bit more freedom of manoeuvre and some protection from the big, bad world of competition outside. The Government wants the stalled process of mergers between building societies kick-started again in the hope that this might produce some powerful mutuals to revitalise the movement. The trouble is that any society that announces a merger is as likely as not to be picked off by predator banks offering tempting windfall profits to their members. Hence the sug-

gestion of a one-year moratorium for mergers, shielding them from predatory advances so they can consult their members in peace and quiet.

But just how is this meant to work in practice? Mrs Knight clearly does not know. If the Bradford & Bingley and Northern Rock, say, were to announce a merger, does this mean Barclays would not be allowed to tell members what sort of alternative deal they might get? Takeover rules are usually designed to protect the rights of investors. Mrs Knight's half-baked suggestion appears, by contrast, designed more to protect building society directors.

Retail financial services in this country have undergone dramatic change in recent years. Competition is intense, and increasing. To survive, building societies must be able to compete on the market's terms, by offering the best deals. This Government, of all, should know that. In the end, it will be market forces, not legislation, that shapes the future of this industry. That would be true even if this draft Bill makes it onto the statute books, which looks a long shot given the likely timing of the next election.

## Unlocking value at Pearson

Pearson is a fine company in many respects with some wonderful assets. Like all big companies, however, it occasionally has em-

barrassments. Right now there could be a big one developing in its midst. It is called Mindscape. However good Pearson's general record in acquisition making might be, this one looks like turning into a real howler.

On the whole, Pearson's acquisition strategy has been well thought out. It has moved impressively to extend its television programming, notably through the acquisition of Thames Television, Grundy Worldwide, and ACI, all of which have added to profits. Publishing has been expanded through the \$580m acquisition of HarperCollins's educational publishing operation, injecting better balance into its range of products for schools and universities.

However, Mindscape, a publisher of CD-Roms, cartridges and floppy discs, for which Pearson paid a handsome £12m in 1994, falls into an altogether different category. This was always meant to be a long term acquisition, a bet on the future. Nonetheless it was also meant to at least break even last year. That is certainly what Pearson told the City to expect. As it is, Mindscape lost £6.9m.

When Pearson carefully warned analysts as recently as December 1995 that operating profits were likely to be below City estimates, it uttered not a word about Mindscape.

The house line is that returns of unsold stock in the new year were higher than expected, and that the bottom fell out of market for floppy discs. Tight pricing in the original equipment manufacturing end of

the CD-Rom market contributed to the malaise, Pearson says. There is clearly more to it than that, however. Evidence of this is in the team of external consultants who are now to comb through the operations and make recommendations for change.

Pearson went to great lengths yesterday to deny persistent reports in the press that Granada had considered mounting a bid for the company last year. But the fact of the matter is that Granada did; it was not an invention of the press. Pearson seems determined to ignore this unpalatable truth as the persistent losses at Mindscape.

Pearson management is clearly very sensitive about the possibility of a takeover bid. And no wonder. There is much value to be unlocked in a company with such a range of attractive assets.

Management's case is hardly helped by the fact it clearly overpaid for Mindscape. Unless Pearson itself does some of the unlocking (and admittedly recent management restructuring suggests it may do) then someone else will do it instead.

## Encourage the French - up to a point

Hackles rise whenever it gets out that a French company has its eyes on a British public service. The idea of Generale des Eaux taking over railway services at Brighton - among other Sussex gems (as

reported on our news pages - will have seasoned commuters choking over their kippers. It is only a few years since the scandal of the season was the French move into the water industry, which culminated last year in the takeover of Northumbrian Water by Lyonnaise des Eaux.

But the reality is that the arrival of the French has had a positive impact on the water industry - witness the 15 per cent price cuts agreed as a condition of the Northumbrian takeover - and there is no reason why they should not be of benefit to the rail industry. Lyonnaise and Generale are members of a French breed that appear to have no UK equivalent - large utility companies specialising in public works and construction projects.

There is no British company of equivalent size and capitalisation to these two giants, with the resources to invest on a comparable scale in public works projects and services. Generale employs 215,000 people and has turnover of £1.8bn, of which nearly a third is outside France.

Given the capital resources of the group, it is likely to be at least as good an owner of a railway franchise as the management buyout teams that are currently over-represented among the bidders for the business on offer. The French deserve to be encouraged - but only up to a point. There is a long way to go before French service industries are as open to outsiders as Britain's railways are now.

Media groups: Publishing and leisure company reveals unexpected losses at its US CD-Rom publisher □ Rival looks to global on-screen expansion

## Pearson remains takeover target after mixed results

MATTHEW HORSMAN  
Media Editor

Pearson, the media, publishing and leisure company, yesterday failed to shed its reputation as a potential takeover target, unveiling mixed results from its range of publishing, entertainment and television assets.

Despite posting pre-tax profits up 23 per cent to £365.1m in 1995, the company, publishers of the *Financial Times* and a leading television programmer, detailed unexpected losses at its US CD-Rom publisher, Mindscape. It also had to rely on an extraordinary profit of £131m from its sale last year of a stake in BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster, to shield a 5 per cent drop in its underlying performance.

The shares rose 7p on the day, to close at 664p. Henderson Crosthwaite reiterated yesterday its breakup estimate of £9 a share.

Analysts were of mixed view on the results. Neil Blackley, at Goldman Sachs, said: "I like the company. It's got some tremendous brands and you can see those shining through."

But other analysts were concerned about the losses of £6.9m

at Mindscape, the US publisher of games and "infotainment" titles on CD-Rom, cartridges and floppy discs, bought for £312m nearly two years ago.

Last December, the company warned analysts that operating profits would be down year on year in 1995, although no mention was made of Mindscape.

"Clearly, the results at Mindscape are unacceptable," Frank Barlow, chief executive, said. The company has hired the consultants McKinsey to undertake a review of the operations and recently announced the appointment of John Moore, formerly head of Penguin US, as chief executive.

The losses were linked in part to a high rate of return in the new year of product shipped in December for the all-important Christmas season.

"What we must do now is a detailed market study to decide where we should concentrate," Mr Barlow said.

The company's television operations, which include Thames Television and Grundy Worldwide, the independent producers, both performed strongly. Despite criticism last year of the £175m paid for Grundy, Greg

Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, told analysts that the acquisition had been a great success.

Westminster Press, the company's regional publishing arm, was also a bright spot, helped by a cost-cutting programme. Lazard Brothers, the investment bank, also turned in a superior performance, and stands to do even better this year once it takes in fees due on its work for Granada on the £3.5bn Forté bid.

Mr Barlow said that future acquisitions were likely to come in the television and media sectors, where management attention has been concentrated in recent years.

A recent restructuring has led to firmer lines of management control and the appointment to the main board of key executives, including Mr Dyke from Pearson Television and John Makinson, formerly managing director of the *Financial Times*, who replaces James Joll as group financing director on 1 April.

Mr Barlow dismissed reports, first published in the *Independent*, that Granada had contemplated a break-up bid for Pearson last year.



Media blues: Frank Barlow, chief executive of Pearson, described the results at Mindscape as "unacceptable", adding: "What we must do now is a detailed market study to decide where we should concentrate"

## Granada plans to focus on TV ventures

Granada, the media and leisure company, is to rebrand its television arm and seek international partners to expand in Asia, America and on the Continent, writes Matthew Horsman.

A potential partner worldwide is Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster, with which Granada has already set up a joint venture to launch five new satellite channels in the UK.

The renewed emphasis on broadcasting follows the £3.5bn acquisition earlier this year of Forté, the hotels and restaurants company, which has consumed management attention since last autumn.

The company is currently looking at several possible names for the new television subsidiary, including Granada Broadcasting System (GBS).

A new chief executive of the television arm is expected to be named within weeks. A shortlist of two candidates is currently being reviewed internally, and it is expected that Duncan Lewis, formally chief executive of Mercury Communications, the telephone company, will be named to the position.

Granada, which operates ITV licences Granada and LWT, also holds 25 per cent of

Yorkshire-Tyne Tees, the ITV franchise holder, and is a large supplier of programming for the ITV network. It earned profits of £140m last year from its television operations.

Charles Allen, chief executive-designate of the company, said in an exclusive interview that "television is clearly a priority for us now. It's inherently a good business and highly cash-generative".

He added that the joint venture with BSkyB was a natural route for expansion. "They are very knowledgeable about pay-TV and have the expertise to set up new channels."

Expansion in Asia, the US and the Continent is likely to follow the model of the joint venture with BSkyB. "We are looking to have alliances in major markets," Mr Allen said. "We are currently preparing to tell our story to potential partners, to prove that we are a pretty girl after all."

Mr Allen said the move into pay-TV did not imply a dissatisfaction with the core commercial TV market. "These are two separate markets, and we believe they should be considered separately," he said.

"Only commercial television can deliver mass audiences, while cable and satellite can address narrow markets."

## GEC confirms Simpson job

RUSSELL HOTTEN

GEC yesterday ended months of speculation by announcing that George Simpson, the Lucas chief executive, would replace Lord Weinstock, who has ruled the defence and electronics giant for 33 years.

Lord Weinstock, 71, will stay on as honorary chairman, an appointment that was greeted with a mixed response from analysts who fear he may be tempted to interfere.

But Mr Simpson, 53, whose Lucas contract does not expire until March 1997, is thought to have secured assurances from the GEC board about his right to manage.

Lord Weinstock's role will be a non-board post, though the company said GEC would "have available the benefit of his long experience and profound knowledge of the company."

In a short statement GEC said that Mr Simpson would join



Staying: Lord Weinstock will be honorary chairman

"as soon as he is free to take up the appointment", giving Lucas time to find a replacement to ensure an orderly transition.

Speculation about Mr Simpson's future has been a cloud over Lucas's shares and is likely to remain so until uncertainty about his successor is clarified, analysts believe. It is possible

that GEC may have to buy out the remainder of Mr Simpson's Lucas contract.

GEC has consistently underperformed the market in recent years, and investors have long wanted a new managing director to re-energise the diverse group. One GEC insider said: "There has been a lot of marking time around here while we wait for things to change at the top."

Although Mr Simpson has been the frontrunner to succeed Lord Weinstock, his appointment is not without its critics who consider that he may find the transition from the motor industry difficult. However, an analyst said yesterday: "George Simpson is a very good industrialist and a good strategic thinker. And what GEC needs now is a new strategy."

Mr Simpson joined Lucas two years ago from British Aerospace, where he was deputy chairman and ran the

Rover group before it was sold to Germany's BMW. Evidence of the improvements being made at Lucas should be revealed in today's interim results.

Some analysts believe that Mr Simpson's inside knowledge of BAE, a long-rumoured GEC bid target, was a key to his appointment. GEC favours forging a national "champion" defence group with BAE to compete with the giant US organisations. However, BAE has been at the forefront in pursuing cross-border mergers as part of the consolidation in the European defence industry.

Mike Styles, analyst at Credit Lyonnais Laing, saw Lord Weinstock's role as useful for Mr Simpson, as there are few people that truly understand the whole company. "It is reassuring for the market that Lord Weinstock and his contacts will remain," he said. GEC shares were down 5p to 359.5p, while Lucas fell 4.5p to 192p.

## IN BRIEF

• Japan's trade surplus shrank for the eighth month running in February due to strong growth in imports. The surplus fell to \$6.13bn compared with \$11.31bn a year earlier. The bilateral deficit with the US fell 30 per cent to \$3.4bn during the same period. Imports have been rising for more than two and a half years, as Japanese firms have increasingly switched to supplying the domestic market from lower-cost plants in South East Asia. In the past 12 months, for example, the value of semiconductor imports has risen 68.8 per cent and office equipment by 59.2 per cent.

• Argos, the catalogue retailer with a £231m cash pile, is rewarding shareholders with a special dividend of 42p per share, equivalent to £127m. This is in addition to the 13p ordinary dividend which has been increased by almost 30 per cent on the previous year. Argos chief executive Mike Smith announced the plans along with impressive results for last year, which saw profits increase by 24 per cent to £124m. The company is looking at opening branches of Argos in the Netherlands. It is considering acquisitions though refused to comment on whether it might buy H Samuel, the jewellery chain being sold by Signet.

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• Ian Lang, Trade and Industry Secretary, agreed to a two-week extension of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission deadline to 4 April for reporting on two proposed acquisitions in the electricity industry: PowerGen's for Midlands Electricity and National Power's for Southern Electric.

• Eastern Track Renewals has been sold to a management buy-out team - Fastlane Rail Services - backed by Apex Partners and Hambros Bank. The York-based business is one of the main track renewal contractors to Railtrack, and also specialises in on-track machine repair and overhaul. John Watts, minister for railways and roads, said: "This sale demonstrates again that the railway industry is prepared to invest in its own future."

• Zeneca plans to sell its US-based DNA identification laboratory, Cellmark Diagnostics, to LifeCodes Corp for an undisclosed amount. Cellmark is the largest non-governmental forensic DNA testing laboratory in the US and the only one with accreditation from the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors.

• Helene, the clothing manufacturer, has received an approach from a management team led by Robert Godfrey, a director of Helene, which may lead to the purchase of two subsidiaries - Just Jamie and Paulrich and Reggie & Co. The purchase is expected to be in excess of £20m.

• Qantas and British Airways will integrate their operations in Bangkok and Singapore. Qantas said that the new arrangements involve joint offices in both cities, as well as merged sales teams and operations. A spokesman said: "While maintaining our individual brands and identities, we believe our partnership has created the strongest overseas airline presence in the region and will provide coordinated services and better value for our customers."

• Club Mediterranée said last year's protests over French nuclear tests cost the company around £4m in lost revenue. However, the company said it was getting back to a "normal situation."

## SkyePharma in Swiss coup

MAGNUS GRIMOND

SkyePharma, the fledgling pharmaceutical group formerly known as Black & Edgington, is expected to more than quadruple its stock market value after buying Jago Holding, a Swiss drug research company, in a deal worth up to £305m. Jacques Gonella, owner of Jago, will be paid £105m in cash, £229m in shares and could pick up £167m over 10 years, under the earn-out terms of the purchase.

The acquisition comes just four months after the former marquee-hiring group reversed into Krypton, a Gibraltar-based pharmaceuticals company controlled by the chairman, Ian

Gowrie-Smith, in a £37m deal. The shares, quoted on the Alternative Investment Market, were suspended at 9p yesterday.

Over the next 10 days, SBC Warburg is leading a "book-building" placing and open offer to raise £135m from investors at home and overseas to finance the initial cash payment for Jago plus working capital. Existing holders can subscribe at the rate of between 105 and 125 shares for every 100 held after a one for 10 capital consolidation. The final price will depend on demand, but is expected to be in the range of 84p to 100p a share. It is hoped that the shares will be relisted on the main market in April.

The Jago deal is being presented as a refutation of SkyePharma. Mr Gowrie-Smith, who was the moving force behind the relaunch of Medeva as a generics-led drugs company, said yesterday: "It's been a long time in the coming, but my ambition is to create another pharmaceuticals company... and I couldn't wish for more than bringing together Jago and SkyePharma."

Founded in 1983 by Mr Gonella, Jago claims a list of blue chip pharmaceutical companies for its drug delivery technologies, including Eli Lilly, Procter & Gamble and SmithKline Beecham. The main one is Geomatrix, which

controls the release of drugs in tablet form, obviating the need to take several doses in a day or increasing the ability of an active ingredient to target a particular part of the body. By combining the technology with existing drugs, Mr Gowrie-Smith believes this could extend the protected life of pharmaceuticals coming off patent over the next six years. The market for these so-called generics is expected to rise from \$4.3bn to \$14.4bn over that period.

The company already has three Geomatrix-linked products on the market in the cardiovascular (high blood pressure) and anti-inflammatory therapeutic areas.

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## business

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

## Hammerson gets into shape

First the bad news. Hammerson's share price is 23 per cent lower than two years ago and less than half the level at which it entered the 1990s. The property company's net assets, which ended 1992 at 384p per share, finished last year at 370p. The dividend, cut in half in 1992, nudged up yesterday but by a less than breathtaking 6.5 per cent.

The good news, however, is that the owner of the Brent Cross shopping centre looks in better shape now than at any point since Ron Spinney took over a hopelessly overextended, unfocused world-wide property investor in May 1993. Since then he has cleared out the dross, reduced debt and focused on a handful of markets where Hammerson sees growth.

That good news was just beginning to become evident in full-year figures reported yesterday, which showed a modest 5 per cent rise in rental income translated into a 22 per cent underlying rise in operating profits from £52.7m to £64.3m, a more meaningful figure than the reported number in our table which includes lumpy disposal profits.

Hammerson is now roughly in the shape Mr Spinney always envisaged. About half the assets are in the UK, with a quarter each in Europe and North America. By asset class, the split is about 60/40 in favour of retail over offices.

That balance makes sense with Hammerson's portfolio revealing a wealth of growth potential from the shop assets compared with probably years of stagnation from offices. The retail assets are currently being rented at about 7 per cent below market rates, suggesting good growth. Offices, by contrast, are on average pulling in 30 per cent more than Hammerson could achieve with replacement tenants. Fortunately, most leases still have a long stretch to run, so the income is safe.

In an era of subdued inflation, the challenge for property companies is to generate extra value for shareholders by reading cycles better than their peers, trading properties cleverly, buying the right stock and managing assets astutely.

Most property companies, grown complacent on years of rising prices, do not have a clue how to do those things. Hammerson does, as it has clearly shown with its shrewd purchase and development of 99 Bishopsgate, a bombed-out office block in the City on which the company has already made a handsome turn. With luck it will do the same with its most recent purchase, Birmingham's ugly Bull Ring centre.

Mr Spinney has laid a good set of

foundations. All he needs now is for the green shoots of the property recovery to take hold. In the meantime, a 17 per cent discount to forecast net assets of 400p, at yesterday's share price of 342p, provides a solid floor.

## Bunzl's double act well received

When Anthony Habgood and David Williams took control at Bunzl in 1991, the rival paper groups Bowater (now Rexam) and Arjo Wiggins Appleton were sneezing and Bunzl was on the floor after a 1980s spending spree. After nearly five years of treatment by the duo, the roles have been reversed. Both the big groups are now suffering at the hands of the paper cycle, while Bunzl's distribution businesses have ridden out recent wild fluctuations in pulp (and plastics) prices.

Yesterday, the group announced pre-tax profits up a third to £106m, right at the top of expectations, and was rewarded with an 8p rise in the share price to 209p.

The medicine administered by

Messrs Habgood and Williams has been to dump around a third of the business and concentrate on four areas, ranging from paper and plastic plates and the like to protective plastic caps for engineering parts, where it has leading positions. As a result, the group has seen net margins rise from 4.3 per cent in 1992 to 6.1 per cent last year, when return on capital topped a highly respectable 20 per cent, even after taking account of goodwill on acquisitions.

The problem for management now is how to maintain the momentum of growth. Profits have risen at a faster rate than sales since 1992, showing compound growth of 25 per cent over that period, some eight points ahead of the expansion in the top line. But fatter margins will be harder to come by from here on. The building supplies business, the last of the remaining serious underperformers, went in mid-1994.

Mr Habgood is confident that growth can continue and points to new business won in the key US market so far this year. Contracts with Supervalu, a grocery distributor, will alone be worth in excess of \$400m over four years. But to get things going, Bunzl may need to use its minimal 11 per cent gearing to buy something bigger than

the £3.7m of bolt-on acquisitions announced yesterday.

Despite a lowly forward rating of 12, based on profits of £116m this year, the shares may mark time until there are signs of further action. Hold.

## Argos sidesteps high street woes

Few retailers had a better 1995 than Argos. As the catalogue retailer sidestepped the high street woes of many rivals, the shares rose by around 80 per cent and finished the year by soaring into the FT-SE 100.

Yesterday's figures showed why. Profits were 24 per cent higher at £124m on sales up 14 per cent to £1.4bn. This was in spite of higher costs caused by an extended print run of the company's catalogue and rising paper prices which made them more expensive to produce.

Argos's secret has been its low price, no frills operation, which has caught the mood of the budget-conscious 1990s. It also has plenty of scope for expansion.

The company now has 367 stores including 56 superstores. Another 31 will open this year. Argos Call and Collect stores which carries no stock but guarantees delivery within 24 hours is proving successful in its three store trial. The trial of First Stop, which concentrates on lower priced consumer durables is to be tested in another location before roll out. Like-for-like sales also look promising. They rose by 7.7 per cent last year while the margin edged down 0.73 per cent to 7.4 per cent. The trend has continued into the current year with like-for-like sales up 8 per cent.

The big question hanging over the shares was what management might do with the company's £231m cash pile. After the failure with the Chesterman furniture deal, an acquisition would have been frowned upon by the City. The £127m special dividend is a safe option, though it will hit profits due to lower interest receivable next year.

Analysts have downgraded accordingly and BZW now expects profits of £133.5m this year. With the shares down 2.5p to 638p yesterday that puts them on a steady forward rating of 22. After last year's spectacular run, they now look fully valued.

## John Willcock CITY DIARY

## Carling finds a whole new ball game in the NHS

Now that Will Carling is no longer captain of the England rugby team he can concentrate even harder on his commercial activities. How fitting that, having been carried off the Ireland game on Saturday with torn ligaments, our Will should this Wednesday be launching a health-care appointments company.

Match Healthcare Services has been formed to place specialist medical and nursing staff within NHS trusts. A press hand-out declares:

"The Eve Club on London's Regent Street, made famous by the affairs of the Hon Mr John Profumo and Miss Christine Keeler, will again play host to an affair of a different kind."

"This time the star player is Will Carling, but on a considerably less scandalous venture!" Nudge, nudge, as they say. Let's hope some paramedics are on hand if he falls over again.

On the same day Will's former team-mate Rob Andrew will be trying to beat the longest world place-kick record as part of the 1996 Property Awards. Property agents are obviously a rugby mad lot – Rob Andrew used to be one – and the London Docklands Development Corporation took advantage of this test weekend.

The LDDC was attending the MIPIM property conference in Cannes, and won wide acclaim from the British contingent by setting up a huge screen in a marquee on the beach to show the England-Ireland match live. Locals were startled, ac-

Simon Jeffreys, employment partner at City solicitors McKenna & Co, rubs his hands with glee relating the story of a client who had a problem with an employee who was "grossly abusing his sick leave". The client knew what was happening, but couldn't prove anything. Until, that is, the employee appeared on the front of an angling magazine proudly displaying an enormous carp. The photo caption revealed that the date this monster was landed happened to be one of the dates when said employee had "thrown a sickie". He must have been gutted.



Carried off: Will Carling's commercial activities now include a health-care appointments company

According to our man on the spot, by the sudden blast of the national anthem being belted out by 200-odd property agents.

Argos, the catalogue retail company, leapt onto the information super highway nine months ago when it introduced shopping via the Internet. And the fruits of this Cybershopping so far? Since launch, 22 items sold.

The Methodist Church has just received an astonishing windfall of £92m from the sale of a plot of land in central Hong Kong. To be more accurate, the Council for World Mission, a small Westminster-based charity with historic links to the Methodist Church, has suddenly found itself bigger than the British Red Cross. According to the Methodist

Recorder, the land was bought from the Crown by the London Missionary Society in 1887, and two hospitals were built on it. Nineteen years ago the CWM took over the hospitals, and three years ago it moved them elsewhere and sold the site for £135m. With just 15 staff and 62 mission partners worldwide, the CWM now finds itself, in investment income terms, nearly as big as the National Trust.

Mike Blackburn, chief executive of Halifax, as is fickle as the rest of us when it comes to management gurus. Four years ago Blackburn was smitten by the then fashionable Tom Peters. After one session he commented: "It's a bit like an evangelical meeting... What did impress me was his stress on empowering people." Now Halifax are lead sponsors of a two-day masterclass by "management expert" Gary Hamel.

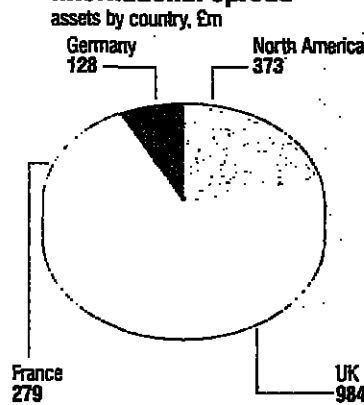
Blackburn described this as a "very special event. Gary Hamel's work has been enormously influential... his views have influenced our approach to the analysis of our business."

## Hammerson at a glance

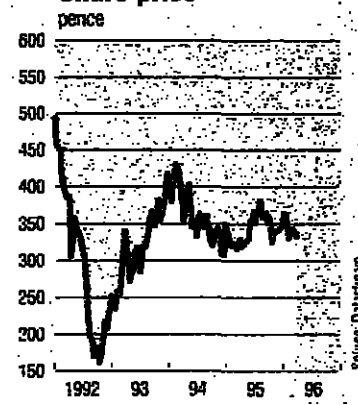
Market value: £969m, share price 342p

Trading record	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Turnover (£m)	114.2	126.2	117.6	120.1	125.9
Pre-tax profits (£m)	-41.1	7.9	39.8	107.5	57.7
Earnings per share (pence)	-32.9	-2.7	13.9	32.8	33.0
Dividends per share (pence)	20.5	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.7

## International spread



## Share price



## IN BRIEF

• **TI Group's** full-year figures were welcomed in the City yesterday, with analysts nudging up their forecasts for the diversified industrial group. After a 20 per cent jump in pre-tax profits for the year to December to £44.9m, current year forecasts were being moved up to between £52m and £53m. The company said demand for its products, which range from resistors to circuit board assemblies and suspended ceilings, had remained strong throughout the year with electronic components showing the strongest growth. Earnings per share rose 20 per cent to 19.5p while the dividend increased by a similar margin to 6.52p.

• **Takare**, the nursing home group, warned yesterday that industry occupancy levels would not match those of last year. It said problems largely related to temporary local authority funding difficulties and this would be seen as a short-term dip in the group's traditionally high occupancy levels. The group added 1,050 beds in 1995, taking the total to 7,620, but said newly commissioned homes were taking longer to fill. Pre-tax profits inched ahead from £21.1m to £21.8m last year, hit by the decision to depreciate buildings. The dividend rises 13 per cent to 2.6p after a final of 1.7p.

## COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Argos (F)	1,440m (1,250m)	124m (100m)	27.5p (22.3p)	13.0p (10.5p)
Astles (F)	372m (312m)	26.1m (21.0m)	7.33p (5.89p)	1.50p (1.20p)
Bund (F)	1,760m (1,620m)	105m (79.5m)	15.5p (12p)	5.5p (5p)
Glynwed Ind (F)	1,250m (1,020m)	84.2m (67.1m)	25.76p (21.34p)	12.75p (12.25p)
Hammerson (F)	126m (120m)	57.7m (105m)	13p (14.3p)	10.65p (10p)
Wanganeen Bracon (F)	48.9m (41.1m)	2.5m (2.0m)	10.11p (7.25p)	2.5p (2p)
Maybarn Sp (F)	49.7m (43.0m)	5.6m (4.9m)	18.8p (16.1p)	7.2p (6.4p)
Pearson (F)	1,830m (1,550m)	365m (230m)	47.1p (40.4p)	16.5p (15p)
Polypipe (F)	94.2m (84.7m)	9.67m (5.31m)	4.06p (3.59p)	0.83p (0.81p)
Royal Doulton (F)	243m (228p)	15.2m (12.6m)	17.3p (15.4p)	8.5p (7.5p)
Takare (F)	110m (90.0m)	21.8m (21.1m)	14.3p (14.5p)	2.6p (2.5p)
TI Group (F)	470m (397m)	44.5m (35.6m)	19.5p (16.2p)	6.52p (5.45p)
Vitac (F)	132m (97.1m)	20.7m (20.1m)	52.3p (48.2p)	10.5p (9p)
Wilson Bowden (F)	238m (242m)	29.6m (37.1m)	21.1p (27.1p)	10.05p (10.05p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (N) - Nine months

## Glynwed pipes up 25% rise in profit

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Glynwed, the Aga cookers to pipes business, surprised the City with a 25.5 per cent profit rise despite worries about the slowdown in the UK's rate of economic recovery.

Analysts edged up their forecasts for this year as the company reported profits of £84.2m and trading improvements in most key operations. Zafar Khan at Societe Generale Strauss Turnbull raised his forecast for this year by £4m to £102m.

About 66 per cent of Glynwed's market is in the UK, but the company said that continued growth in exports, up 35 per

cent last year, would cushion it until the expected economic upturn at the end of 1996.

Bruce Ralph, Glynwed's chief executive, said the pipe business had benefited from higher spending by the water companies. The metals businesses were also doing well, with volumes running at the same level as last year, despite fears of a slowdown in industrial output. "Overall, group order intake is running at the same level as the last quarter of 1995," he said.

The group would be looking to make some non-core disposals in the construction materials division, while further bolt-on deals were also possible.

Metals reported record profits of £16.8m (£11.3m), while plastics' profits rose from £19.9m to £26.3m thanks to acquisitions. A good start to the year in the consumer products division, which makes cookers, could not be sustained because of high raw material prices and profits slipped from £14m to £12.1m.

Disposals had helped minimise the company's exposure to the UK economic cycle. The £147.3m acquisition of Vitac last August would also have a significant impact on reducing cyclical swings. The Vitac purchase helped raise gearing to 40.9 per cent at end-

December, but Mr Ralph said he was comfortable with the debt level and expected this to fall to around 25 per cent by the end of 1996.

Vitac's integration into Glynwed was progressing well. It had strengthened the company's position as a world leader in water, gas, and related pipework systems.

The results include a four-month contribution from Vitac, which made an operating profit of £4.6m, before reorganisation costs of £1.1m. Group operating profits rose 25 per cent to £93m. The final dividend is 8.35p, lifting the total payout from 12.25p to 12.75p.

## Weekend breaks with THE INDEPENDENT

2 nights for the price of 1

We would like to invite you to take a weekend break and stay two nights for the price of one. In conjunction with Queens Moat Houses Hotels, our offer allows you to pay for one night's bed and breakfast and get the next night, including breakfast, free. Rates are based on two adults sharing a twin or double room and the only stipulation is that your weekend break must include a Saturday.

You can choose from 82 hotels located throughout the UK, ranging from country houses and cosy inns, to modern hotels in the heart of city centres. All are three or four star properties and many will allow you to enjoy a longer stay on the same basis, pay for two nights and stay for four, for example. You can check this when making your booking.

To add to our offer, children under sixteen can stay free when sharing a room with two adults, plus children under six can breakfast free. For those of you who are feeling energetic, many of the hotels offer a Body Club or Club Moatvation Health and Fitness Centre which you are free to use.

Pictured here is Stifford Moat House near Grays in Essex. Set in six acres of landscaped gardens, which the hotel's elegant Regency restaurant overlooks, it offers a truly peaceful setting. A double room for two people for two nights costs just £60

\* Apart from the Royal Crescent Hotel, Bath and Blisley Manor near Stratford upon Avon are only available for stays Sunday-Thursday. Some hotels may be able to offer mini-week breaks on the same basis, please check when booking.



## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- The offer is valid until 5 May 1996. Some hotels will extend the offer until 26 May 1996, please check when making your booking.
- This offer is only valid based upon two people sharing a twin/double bedroom for a minimum of two consecutive nights accommodation including full national breakfast.
- All reservations are subject to availability and allocation of suitable bedrooms being available.
- Children under six years of age when sharing a room with two adults will stay and eat free.

- for bed and national breakfast only.
- Children aged six to fifteen years when sharing a room with two adults will stay free and be charged £4 for national breakfast per child per day.
- Children accommodated in their own room will be charged the same independent rate as adults. No further discounts are applicable.
- Full payment, including extras, is to be settled prior to departure from your selected hotel.
- The offer is only valid when you book through

- QUEENS LINE UK Reservations, 0645 113311, quoting "Independent Offer" at the time of booking. Lines are open 8 am - 8.30 pm weekdays, 9 am - 4.30 pm at weekends and Bank Holidays.
- Cancellations are to be notified to QUEENS LINE UK Reservations as soon as possible and are accepted up to 4 pm on the proposed day of arrival.
- This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, or promotion and is not valid

- for special events, theatre breaks, half board arrangements, luxury weekends or week-long programmes.
- Offers only apply if the hotel is managed by a company in the Queens Moat Houses Group at the time a reservation is made.
- Photocopies of tokens and the vouchers are unacceptable.
- The weekend break prizes are each worth up to a maximum of £384 and must be taken before 31 August 1996, subject to availability.

## HOW TO QUALIFY

To qualify for your 2 for 1 weekend break, you must collect four differently numbered tokens from the seven we are printing until Saturday 23 March. You will need to attach them to a voucher which we will print in tomorrow's Independent. Today we are printing Token 3, tomorrow we will print Token 4.

## HOW TO BOOK

For a Town & Country Classic Weekend Break brochure call 0541 543 500 quoting "Independent Offer". Once you have chosen your hotel call QUEENS LINE UK Reservations on 0645 113311, quoting "Independent Offer". Your confirmation will then be sent out within 48 hours. Please remember to take your voucher and four differently numbered tokens to your hotel, they must be presented on arrival.

## £7,000 OF WEEKEND BREAKS TO BE WON

Today we are giving away four weekend breaks. Each prize entitles two people to a two night bed and breakfast weekend break at the hotel of their choice. For a chance to win one of our prizes, simply call the following number: 0891 252 999. You will be asked to answer one simple question and leave your name, address and telephone number. Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times. Four winners will be picked at random from all correct entrants after lines close at midnight tonight. Normal Newspaper Publishing rules apply. The Editor's decision is final.

## Weekend breaks

TOKEN 3

THE INDEPENDENT



# This tantalising argument for easy money doesn't quite add up

The Governor of the Bank of England may feel that the appropriate stance for the central bank should be to err on the side of caution — as he said in Sweden yesterday — but that would not be the market view of current UK monetary policy.

There are two main arguments for erring on the other side, the first of which has received a great deal of attention, the second of which has not. The first is that within Europe the principal danger remains one of deflation, not inflation, and the UK economy is sufficiently closely integrated with the Continental one that some overspill of this deflation is bound to take place. The second is the extent to which the UK natural rate of growth may have risen as a result of the structural changes which have taken place during the last few years. If this natural rate of growth has risen, it is argued, it should be possible to run the economy closer to capacity without running into capacity constraints. So the present easy money policy is less dangerous than it might appear.

The second argument is a tantalising one because it is impossible to prove until the event, in which case it may be too late. Eddie George was talking yesterday about the catastrophe of economic policy in the late 1980s when sterling shadowed the mark, leading to too loose a



ECONOMIC VIEW  
**HAMISH McRAE**

monetary policy and an unsustainable boom. But at the time the relaxed policy stance was justified, in part at least, by the argument that thanks to the structural changes of the 1980s, the economy had a capacity for faster growth. In short, exactly the same arguments were used then as are being used now.

Yet there ought to be some truth in it. If one looks not at the possible rise in the natural rate of growth but at the possible fall in the natural (or non-inflationary) rate of

wage-generated inflation, in contrast to the situation in the late 1980s. The trouble is that when one looks at the growth of capacity it is very hard to demonstrate statistically that anything has changed at all.

Intuitively it would be reasonable to expect that a predominantly service economy would respond more quickly to changes in demand than a predominantly manufacturing one. Manufacturing plants take months, maybe years, to equip. Service industries do not in gen-

eral have large plants with long lead times, and so can increase their output quite quickly by taking on more staff. The very fact that employment has responded more quickly to increased demand this cycle would support this point.

There is a shortage of trained staff because of over-rapid expansion you would expect that to show up in rising wage rates; if the shortage is in computer software, rising prices for software packages or (again) wage rates for experts; if in management, well, the way round that is to out-source management by bringing in consultants — something that is clearly taking place, but so far without evident signs of inflation.

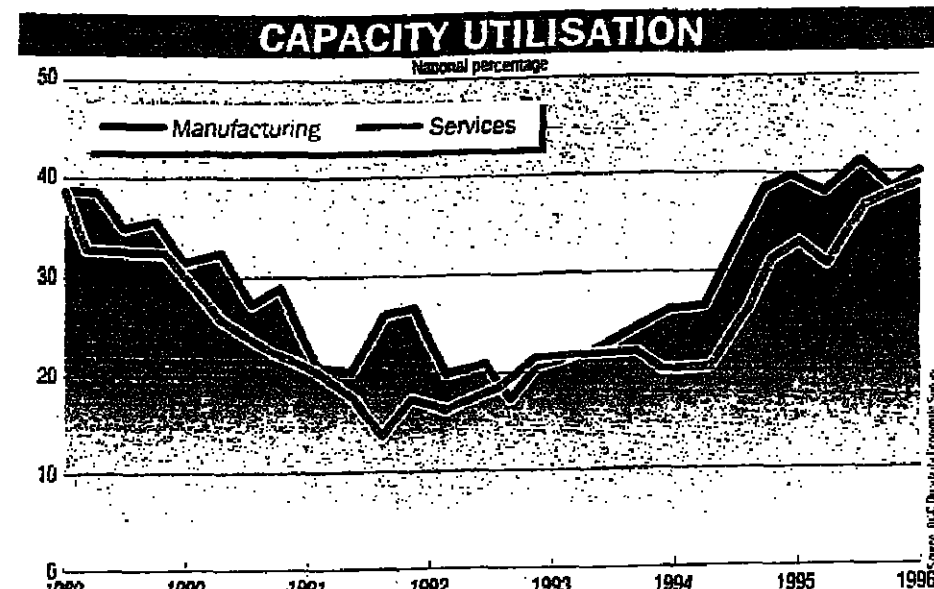
The trouble is that what ought intuitively to be happening is not showing up in the figures. The most useful work here is being done by the British Chambers of Commerce, which carries out a quarterly survey of capacity utilisation in manufacturing and in service industries. Since 1989 it has been asking both types of company whether they are operating at full capacity, and recording the percentage that say they are. The results are shown in the graph.

You can see the problem. If service industry was really much more flexible than manufacturing you would expect fewer

companies to report that they were at full capacity; you would expect more of them to be able to find ways of upping their output. Yet the two lines move pretty much together. Sure, service companies have tended through the recession to have had more spare capacity, or rather fewer of them have claimed to be at full output. But the similarities are more noticeable than the differences. And at the end of last year there was no significant difference at all: 40 per cent of manufacturing firms were at full capacity, while 38 per cent of service firms were. This latter figure is the highest since 1989.

The Chambers of Commerce does not go back before 1989, so it is hard to compare the situation now with that at the height of the last boom in 1978 and 1988. But some calculations by JP Morgan suggest that the comparable figure would have been about 44 per cent then. If that is right we are not quite as close to the limit, but not that far off it. Indeed the speed at which the recovery over the last two years mopped up capacity suggests that the natural growth rate of service industries may not even be as high as it was in the 1980s. JP Morgan's conclusion is that there is no sign of an increase in the UK potential growth rate.

Statistically that is right, but I would like to think it is wrong.



How might we tell, without testing the proposition to destruction? The most sensible way forward, perhaps, is to listen to what firms are saying, in particular about reasons why they might be unable to expand.

According to the Chambers of Commerce, there seem to be two main constraints: people and

premises. Companies always complain that they cannot find good people, which may say something about their training and employment policies than about the underlying availability. But the proof of this particular pudding is in the eating, for provid-

ed the shortages do not show up in a sharp rise in wages, we do not need to worry about them. The market will signal if things are going wrong.

Premises is more of a surprise for you might imagine, given the scale of the recession, that there would be no problem. In fact many companies, particularly

Where else might one pick up capacity constraints? General pressure on the infrastructure is an obvious area, but our newest infrastructure — telecommunications — has vast overcapacity. There are things like congestion on the roads (services involve a lot of travel) but that is difficult to distinguish. Airport throughput is up sharply this year, but actual capacity constraints are hardly evident.

So you end up with a rather unsatisfactory conclusion: that there is no evidence that the natural rate of growth of our service-oriented economy has risen, but also no evidence yet of overheating. Futility conclusions? Press on until there are clear signs of strain, but be ever-ready to jack up interest rates to slow things down, if signals go to amber. Trouble is, they will do the first, but not the second. Or that is what Eddie George doubtless fears.

## The trouble is that what ought intuitively to be happening is not showing up in the figures

unemployment, it is clear that there have been no improvements. The OECD calculates that the latter has come down at least a couple of percentage points; unemployment is now below 8 per cent and there is virtually no sign of a resumption

eral have large plants with long lead times, and so can increase their output quite quickly by taking on more staff. The very fact that employment has responded more quickly to increased demand this cycle would support this point.

### Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Canada	20.834	17.9	41.28	13803	2.1	0.0628	
Germany	2.2580	57.50	165.45	14782	26.94	77.74	14000
France	7.2322	136.17	354.323	55488	58.50	150.40	12000
Italy	2.2594	74.58	217.01	1013	58.46	70.82	10300
Japan	162.37	77.73	227.20	10801	48.47	128.30	71902
ECU	122.8	5.12	45.40	12542	7.9	0.5408	
Belgium	48.388	25.9	34.29	30283	57.47	165.45	205494
Denmark	87.288	145.102	407.918	58870	80.40	170.10	33846
Netherlands	2.2586	84.16	170.96	11846	36.25	11800	12000
Norway	0.8987	10.8	21.8	15795	9.4	7.12	0.4256
Sweden	8.9356	92.75	350.253	6428	50.15	143.60	
Spain	160.08	37.4	129.10	13430	34.48	85.03	84393
Switzerland	10.288	12.8	29.40	87776	140.10	315.965	45568
Finland	1.2811	68.60	138.98	13890	37.34	104.04	10805
South Africa	1.2811	68.60	138.98	13890	37.34	104.04	10805
Malaysia	3.8996	0.0	0.0	2.2836	4.14	80.00	17226
New Zealand	2.2460	41.55	125.148	14883	30.32	88.90	0.946
Saudi Arabia	5.2444	0.0	0.0	3.7505	8.7	9.14	2.544
Singapore	2.2548	0.0	0.0	1.4087	41.50	30.88	0.946

### Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Australia	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Brazil	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
China	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Egypt	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Finland	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Ghana	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Greece	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
India	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	
Kuwait	1.537	9.7	25.22	1000	2.0	0.0773	

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate to add to spot rate.  
Dollar rates quoted as percentages.  
For the latest foreign exchange rate call 0801 232 3033.  
Cells cost 30p per minute (cheaper rate 40p after three).

### Interest Rates

UK	Base	6.00%	Germany	Base	3.00%	US	Prime	8.75%	Japan	Discount	0.50%
France	Intervention	3.80%	Canada	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	Discount	3.00%	3.00%		
Italy	Discount	9.00%	Denmark	Discount	5.75%	Spain	Discount	1.50%	1.50%		
Netherlands	Advances	3.00%	Discount	3.75%	Sweden	Repo (1w)	7.5%	Lombard	4.125%		

### Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr
UK	8.00%	7.43	6.1%	5.0%	Netherlands	5%	5.35	6%	6.57
US	5.1%	6.12	5.1%	4.4%	Spain	10.7%	9.43	10.2%	10.4
Japan	6.4%	1.91	3.1%	3.5%	Italy	10.1%	10.21	10.1%	10.72
Australia	6.1%	6.82	1%	1.0%	Belgium	7.5%	6.47	6.1%	6.1%
Germany	5.1%	5.31	6%	6.0%	Switzerland	1%	0.71	0.7%	0.67
France	5.1%	5.92	7.1%	6.8%	ECU (1w)	6.47	6.47	7.1%	7.28

### Money Market Rates

	Overnight	7 Day
Interbank	5 1/4 8 1/4	5 1/4 6
Starting CDs	-	-
Local Authority Deps	5 1/4	5 1/4
Discount Market Deps	5 1/4	5 1/4
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-	-
Dollar CDs	-	-
ECU Linked Dep	-	-















## sport

## Forest determined to stifle Klinsmann

## Ferguson handed European chance

One goal, that is all Nottingham Forest require against Bayern Munich at the City Ground tonight, but goals do not come easily to Frank Clark's men.

They have managed just five in seven UEFA Cup ties, the latest being Steve Chettle's header in a 1-1 first-leg defeat in Munich a fortnight ago.

That away goal has put Forest a 1-0 win away from being the first English team to make the UEFA Cup's last four in a dozen years. Not since Forest themselves, and eventual winners Tottenham (remember Tony Parks' penalty heroics in the final), made the 1984 semi-

finals has an English club progressed as far. Once the property of England, with nine wins in 14 years, it has become an Italian fiefdom.

While Forest were held at Middlesbrough at the weekend, Bayern briefly went top of the Bundesliga by beating Kaiserslautern (Borussia Dortmund have since displaced them). However, all is not well. Mehmet Scholl, the most influential player in the first leg, was dismissed on Saturday and there are continued reports of disaffection in the ranks - not that Clark was making any thing of them.

"We have been hearing that

from day one," the Forest manager said. "It does not seem to have done them any harm. You get personality clashes in any dressing-room."

Clark speaks from experience. Stan Collymore was a man apart from his team-mates and manager during Forest's final 13 matches last season, yet they won nine and drew the other four.

"They are going to give us a tremendous test," Clark added. "I have always thought we are capable of getting past them, but only our best form will do it." Forest will have Colin Cooper back from suspension and with Des Lytle restored to the

## Glenn Moore on the prospects for tonight's Uefa Cup quarter-final

right-back position, their regular European defensive unit (two goals conceded in six games) will be in place. They are aware that Bayern are strong on the counter-attack - they scored five away to Lokomotiv Moscow in a previous round, after losing the first leg.

Jürgen Klinsmann, who scored twice that night and in the first leg against Forest, has now scored 12 goals in the

competition. Although he will be without his injured partner, Alexander Zickler, he remains the main threat.

"The difference between Bayern and the French teams we played [Auxerre and Lyon] is that they are capable of scoring goals out of nothing, especially Klinsmann. That is why we cannot throw ourselves at them looking for the quick goal," Steve Stone said.

Even if Forest stop Klinsmann, they still have to get that goal. No Forest player has managed double figures this season and their top scorer and most inspirational forward, Bryan Roy, is struggling with a thigh

injury. Jason Lee, who has not started a game this year, stands by.

Stone and Ian Woan, who both missed the Middlesbrough match through injury, should return, but Forest will be without the suspended Scott Gemmill in midfield. David Phillips is likely to deputise if fit.

"Not too many people are giving us a chance," Cooper said, "but the same people thought we would get beaten in every round so far."

Forest's preparation has not been helped by unfounded speculation linking Clark to the England post. While he would be a reasonable choice, it is not

one the Football Association have made and Clark himself appeared angered, rather than flattered, by the report.

"I have not had any contact with any representatives of the FA," he said. "It is embarrassing to me at a time when all our efforts should be focused."

All the same, should Forest gain a tactical and actual victory tonight, the prospect of Clark succeeding Terry Venables would hardly be unlikely to intrigue. However, while Bayern are not the stuff of Bavarian legend, neither are Forest, and neither Clark nor his team are likely to progress in the immediate future.

Duncan Ferguson was yesterday given the chance to prove he is the man to lead Scotland's challenge for Euro 96 when Craig Brown named him in a 23-man squad for next Wednesday's friendly international against Australia at Hampden Park.

However, the Everton striker must first prove his fitness and yesterday he saw a specialist (in case if he needs a third hernia operation in the space of year) Ferguson and his club manager, Joe Royle, will go through the doctor's report and advice today.

"We would like Duncan to start the game against Australia next week," Brown said. "There has been talk of him having an operation this summer, in which circumstance he would clearly be no use to us."

Brown had assembled 32 players for a get-together a fortnight ago, but now, as preparations for Euro 96 begin in earnest, nine players have been jettisoned.

"The ones left out have not been bombed out," Brown said. "But this squad is a clear indication of my thoughts for Euro 96."

The nine players dropping out, apart from the injured Stewart McKimmie of Aberdeen, are: Gordon Durie (Rangers), Bryan Gunn (Norwich), John McGinlay (Bilton), Brian Martin (Motherwell), Phil O'Donnell (Celtic), Brian O'Neil (Celtic), John Robertson (Hearts) and Duncan Shearer (Aberdeen).

If Ferguson, 24, is fit, he will win his sixth cap next week, while his former Rangers teammate, Ally McCoist, could enter the Scottish Football Association's 'Hall of Fame' if he receives his 50th cap.

"It will be a hard game for us and I would say if we lost, that would be a blow in the preparations," Brown said.

SCOTLAND SQUAD (by Australia, Hampden Park, Wednesday 27 March): Booth (Aberdeen), Boyd (Celtic), Barclay (Celtic), Calderwood (Rangers), Collins (Celtic), Ferguson (Everton), Gallacher (Blackburn), Gemmill (North Forest), Gordon (Rangers), Hendry (Blackburn), Hogg (Hearts), Joss (Celtic), Leighton (Hearts), McAllister (Leeds), McCall (Rangers), McCole (Rangers), McEneaney (Rangers), McFadden (Rangers), McStay (Celtic), McTear (Rangers), Spencer (Celtic), Walker (Partick).

## Sri Lanka tired but rewarded

## Cricket

The Sri Lankan team arrived back home yesterday to the expected red carpet treatment after their seven-wicket victory over Australia in Sunday's World Cup final. They were met on the airport tarmac by dancers, hundreds of fans and the obligatory government minister seeking to associate himself with success.

The squad was blessed by Buddhist monks before meeting the country's president, Chandra Kumaratunga. The team looked tired and attributed their fatigue to lack of sleep. "We've hardly had any time to celebrate," Arjuna Ranatunga, their captain, said. "We've hardly had any sleep. Maybe that's why the red eyes."

Those red eyes may widen when they see all the prizes that are to be bestowed on them. If cash and cars were not enough the Maldivian president, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, has invited the team for an all-expenses-paid holiday in the Maldives islands.

The losing captain, Mark Taylor, believes the game is facing an uncertain future unless the games' rulers act decisively. "There's a lot that has to be looked into at the moment. Things like ball-tampering and throwing. We've got to stop sweeping them under the carpet," he said.

The departing West Indies manager, Wes Hall, has criticised the West Indies Cricket Board of Control for announcing managerial changes while his team was still involved in the World Cup. "I think the timing of the changes was deplorable and at some stages I think diabolical," he said.

After the West Indies' shock defeat to Kenya the WCBC announced that Hall and the team coach, Andy Roberts, would be replaced for the forthcoming series against New Zealand.

## London's Refrigerator says 'hello Piccadilly, hello Leicester Square'



Weighing in at approximately 25 St William's Place, Mark Perry made his acquaintance with a couple of archetypal London tourists yesterday as the man better known as 'The Refrigerator' started his new job with the London

Monarchs. The World League of American Football team have signed him partly to play, partly to head their marketing campaign for their season that starts next month. Perry, 33, who scored a touchdown in the 1986

Super Bowl with the Chicago Bears in his first NFL season, said he is ready for the challenge. "I've still got a good three or four years left in me and I want to do something different," he said. Photograph: Robert Hallam

## Super Leaguers set to lift ban

## Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

In the first real sign of compromise for months, Super League players in Australia have offered to lift their boycott on playing in the Australian Rugby League's competition in time to start the season there this weekend.

The condition the 31 players have set is that they should be allowed to organise their own international series - between New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand - open only to Super League players.

They are also insisting that the two new clubs formed for Super League - the Adelaide

Rams and the Hunter Valley Mariners - should be incorporated in the ARL's Optus Cup.

The European Super League's chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, who is in Australia to try to find a way out of the impasse, says the compromise could also save the proposed World Cup Championship and Great Britain tour at the end of this season.

"The proposal provides a reasonable deal for everyone," he said. "It would, in fact, be a small victory for all parties concerned."

The players, who have insisted all along that they would not play for the ARL, are certainly changing their ground.

"A lot of players have made

very hard decisions on this and it's very hard for us to come and swallow our pride," said the former Test centre Chris Johns, a spokesman for the Super League players.

The problem is that the ARL might find some of the players' suggestions equally hard to swallow. The ARL's chairman, Ken Arthurson, said that the proposal would be discussed by representatives of the 12 clubs that have remained loyal to the ruling body during the bitter feud.

The Leeds forward, Adrian Morley, who will play in this Saturday's Six Nations Cup semi-final against Bradford, has signed a new four-year contract with the club.

## Open-door policy criticised

## Basketball

DUNCAN HOOPER

The Budweiser League will throw open its doors to foreign players next season, scrapping the current limit of two imports per club. Next season, when the salary cap will be increased by 35 per cent, clubs will be required to have only five British players on their roster, allowing for five foreigners. This interim step heralds further relaxation in the number of foreigners set to play in Britain.

Behind yesterday's statement that "we will be creating an even more exciting product with more top-quality overseas talent on display," the League's

chief executive, Mike Smith, is plainly aware of the minefield they have decided to cross.

Few quality Americans or Europeans will be attracted by the salary-capped English game, and some clubs will find it cheaper to import the likes of Hungarians, Czechs and Latvians, rather than nurture their own development programmes.

Some clubs may go for the short-term quick fix by loading with foreigners," Smith said. "We know there is a danger of that. When the clubs started to discuss this move none of us were happy that we can no longer safeguard the places of English players at English clubs. We recognise a number of our best players will move abroad

and that there isn't going to be a return flow of the best players from other countries."

The England team coach, Laszlo Nemeth, said: "It is sad news. It definitely cannot help English players or the national team." He would prefer to boost the status of domestic players, rather than attract foreigners.

Basketball's international federation, FIBA, is to allow freedom of movement between EU countries, but Smith said: "We believe Fiba will be forced to go totally open all over Europe, and that's 50 countries."

But next season, any league club with up to five foreigners will have to abide by the existing Fiba "two foreigner" rule in European club competitions.

## TODAY'S NUMBER

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The position Tim Henman now occupies in the world tennis rankings. The 21-year-old from Oxford is only 13 places behind the Canadian-born Greg Rusedski, who, at No 45, is Britain's highest-ranked player.

## England trio's crucial games

## Bowls

Brett Morley, David Cutler and John Bell face two more decisive matches in the eighth World Bowls Championships in Adelaide today. The England trio hauled themselves back from the brink of defeat yesterday to snatch a last-end 17-16 win over Zimbabwe and now face Hong Kong and Fiji.

"The Hong Kong match is a vital one for us. We got out of jail a bit yesterday with a narrow win but Hong Kong too started with a victory and that

makes this one a crunch match," Bell said.

England's pairs also started well, with Tony Allcock and Andy Thomson coasting to a 25-9 win over Brazil. They too face a double challenge, meeting Botswana and Singapore today.

Scotland, the defending pairs champions, snatched a narrow victory in their opening match when Richard Corsie and Alex Marshall surrendered a 20-8 lead to South Africa's Donny Pickett and Neil Burkett. However, a last-end single salvaged a 21-20 victory for the title holders.

## Durham reach Wembley final

## Ice hockey

Durham Wasp are the first of the eight Premier Division sides to confirm a Wembley place at the end of the month for the British Championship final, writes Steve Pinder.

Durham overcame Cardiff Devils 3-2 through Kimmo Maki-Kallila's second-period goal and then beat Newcastle Warriors 5-0. Humberdale look likely to join them from Group B. The two

meet in their play-off game at Humberdale on Saturday.

Group A has Sheffield Steelers one point ahead of Nottingham Panthers and Basingstoke Bison. Bison beat both Sheffield and Fife Flyers, but lost to Panthers 6-3. If the two teams tie on points, progression to Wembley will be decided on games played between the two. Panthers are one game ahead, having already drawn against Basingstoke.

## Reading on attack over cup final date

## Hockey

Reading took advantage of yesterday's draw for the HA Cup semi-finals to express dismay that the final will be held when their Great Britain players are at a tournament in Malaysia, writes Bill Colwill.

The final will be held on 12 May, and Richard Wyatt, the Reading manager, voiced the feelings of all four clubs when he said: "I am dismayed. After all, for the winners European competition is at stake and no club should be asked to play short."

Stephen Barlow, the HA competitions organiser, said: "It is extremely regrettable, but in Olympic year it is very difficult to fit everything in and the invitation to Malaysia was accepted long after the cup final date had been decided. We will naturally listen to any protest from the clubs and to any alternative suggestions."

HA CUP Semi-Final: Tottenham v Reading; Old Londonians v Exeter Graveland, (this to be played at Milton Keynes on 28 April).

HA TROPHY Semi-Final: Norwich City v Coventry and Northwich; West Herts v York Trojans. (This to be played 21 March).

## Athletics

Wang Junxia who cracked the world 3,000 metres record in 1995, has changed her mind about retiring and is training for the Atlanta Olympics, China's official Haier Daily reported.

## Badminton

The England team manager, Guro Gindoff, wants the sport's Olympic qualifying process completely overhauled. He has been disturbed by the number of players withdrawing from tournaments at short notice as the March Olympic qualifying deadline looms. Defeats in tournaments could damage a player's chances of being selected.

## Basketball

Dennis Rodman, the Chicago Bulls forward, is likely to be suspended when the NBA decides the punishment for his behaviour during Saturday's game at New Jersey that included head-butting a referee.

NBA Charlotte 103 Phoenix 102; Detroit 91 Denver 85; Cleveland 118 Sacramento 84; Indiana 105 Toronto 95; Minnesota 90 Vancouver 85; Boston 107 New Jersey 106 (double overtime); Portland 112 Dallas 98; LA Lakers 97 Orlando 96.

## World Championships (Austrian) Pair

First round: Section A: Argentina (1) Romania (2); Israel (3); Mexico (4); North Korea (5); Western Samoa (6); South Africa (7); Section B: Section C: Argentina (1); Romania (2); Israel (3); Mexico (4); North Korea (5); Western Samoa (6); South Africa (7); Section D: Argentina (1); Romania (2); Israel (3); Mexico (4); North Korea (5); Western Samoa (6); South Africa (7).

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## British Women's Indoor Championships

(Lancaster) Singles, semi-finals: England (1) Brown (2) Wales (3) Morgan (4) Scotland (5) Ireland (6) Ireland (7) Ireland (8) Ireland (9) Ireland (10) Ireland (11) Ireland (12) Ireland (13) Ireland (14) Ireland (15) Ireland (16) Ireland (17) Ireland (18) Ireland (19) Ireland (20) Ireland (21) Ireland (22) Ireland (23) Ireland (24) Ireland (25) Ireland (26) Ireland (27) Ireland (28) Ireland (29) Ireland (30) Ireland (31) Ireland (32) Ireland (33) Ireland (34) Ireland (35) Ireland (36) Ireland (37) Ireland (38) Ireland (39) Ireland (40) Ireland (41) Ireland (42) Ireland (43) Ireland (44) Ireland (45) Ireland (46) Ireland (47) Ireland (48) Ireland (49) Ireland (50) Ireland (51) Ireland (52) Ireland (53) Ireland (54) Ireland (55) Ireland (56) Ireland (57) Ireland (58) Ireland (59) Ireland (60) Ireland (61) Ireland (62) Ireland (63) Ireland (64) Ireland (65) Ireland (66) Ireland (67) Ireland (68) Ireland (69) Ireland (70) Ireland (71) Ireland (72) Ireland (73) Ireland (74) Ireland (75) 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# SPORT

## Clark rejects England speculation

### Football

Frank Clark believes almost every manager in the Premiership is in the frame for the England manager's job, but that has not stopped the bookmakers William Hill closing their book on who will succeed Terry Venables.

Their decision followed the Nottingham Forest manager's dismissal of reports that he is to work alongside Venables for Euro 96 before taking over.

"Clearly moves are afoot to approach certain potential managers and the Football Association must have a list of people they wish to sound out," Hill's spokesman, Graham Sharpe, said.

"We have no idea who they may be but would not be surprised if plenty of other people do, which would make it financial suicide for us to continue to bet."

Clark, whose team face Bayern Munich in the Uefa Cup tonight, had been heavily backed recently with his odds being cut from 10-1 to 4-1 third favourite. The Leeds manager, Howard Wilkinson, was the 7-4 favourite and Tottenham's Gerry Francis the next best at 2-1 when the book was closed.

"Speculation is inevitable because almost every Premier League manager could be put in the frame," Clark said. "But to say England are about to appoint me is going too far. I haven't had any contact with the Football Association, either officially or unofficially."

## Herzog brands Bayern as 'vain superstars'

Bayern Munich were branded "vain superstars" by one of their own players on the eve of their second-leg Uefa Cup tie at Nottingham Forest, writes Alan Nixon.

Bayern's Austrian midfielder, Andy Herzog, who is currently seeking a transfer, said: "This team is a bunch of vain superstars. Nobody wants to do the dirty work during the games. If anybody dares to do different, it is looked on as a sign of weakness."

Gary Speed's hopes of appearing in Sunday's Coca-Cola Cup final at Wembley still hang in the balance after visiting a specialist today. The Leeds midfielder suffered a fractured cheekbone in an FA Cup tie with Port Vale last month and was originally expected to be out around three months.

But Speed is desperately keen to play in the final against Aston Villa and his manager Wilkinson has to decide whether to risk the Welsh international. After the doctor's verdict yesterday, Wilkinson said: "All I can say at this stage is that I can't rule Gary out."

Wilkinson decided not to chance him in Sunday's 3-2 draw with Everton, although his gifted midfielder could have a short-term solution by wearing a protective mask, similar to the one worn effectively by Paul Gascoigne.

And his experience could be a key factor in the club's bid to secure a place in Europe for the second successive season.

Leeds have a busy week in the run-up to Wembley and face Liverpool at Anfield tomorrow in an FA Cup quarter-final replay.

However, if Speed is to have a run-out before the final, it is more likely to come the following day when the reserves travel to Stoke in the Pontins League. Speed was one of a number of regulars missing in the match against Everton, mainly through injury and suspension as Leeds fielded five players aged 21 or under.

Their influential captain, Gary McAllister, will definitely face Liverpool after being ordered to rest by his manager while the injured pair, Tony Yeboah and Tony Dorigo, could also return.

The central defender David Wetherall will again be missing as he completes his two-match ban as Leeds aim to take a step closer to another Wembley appearance.

Bolton yesterday agreed terms with Aston Villa to sign the former England Under-21 defender Bryan Small, who will sign on a free transfer subject to a routine medical.

The Bolton manager, Colin Todd, who has been searching for several months to find a left-sided defender, said: "Several clubs were in the hunt for Bryan, including Nottingham Forest, and we are delighted he has agreed to come here."

Small will go straight into Bolton's squad for tomorrow night's Premiership home match with Tottenham Hotspur when a win would lift the Burnley side off bottom place for the first time in four months.

The French coach, Aimé Jacquet, continued to omit his English exiles Eric Cantona and David Ginola when he named a squad of 16 to play Belgium in a warm-up match for Euro 96 on 27 March. The pair were left out even though two key midfielders, Youri Djorkaeff and Vincent Guerin, are injured. The Paris St-Germain defender Alain Roche, who has missed most of the season with a serious knee injury, has been recalled.

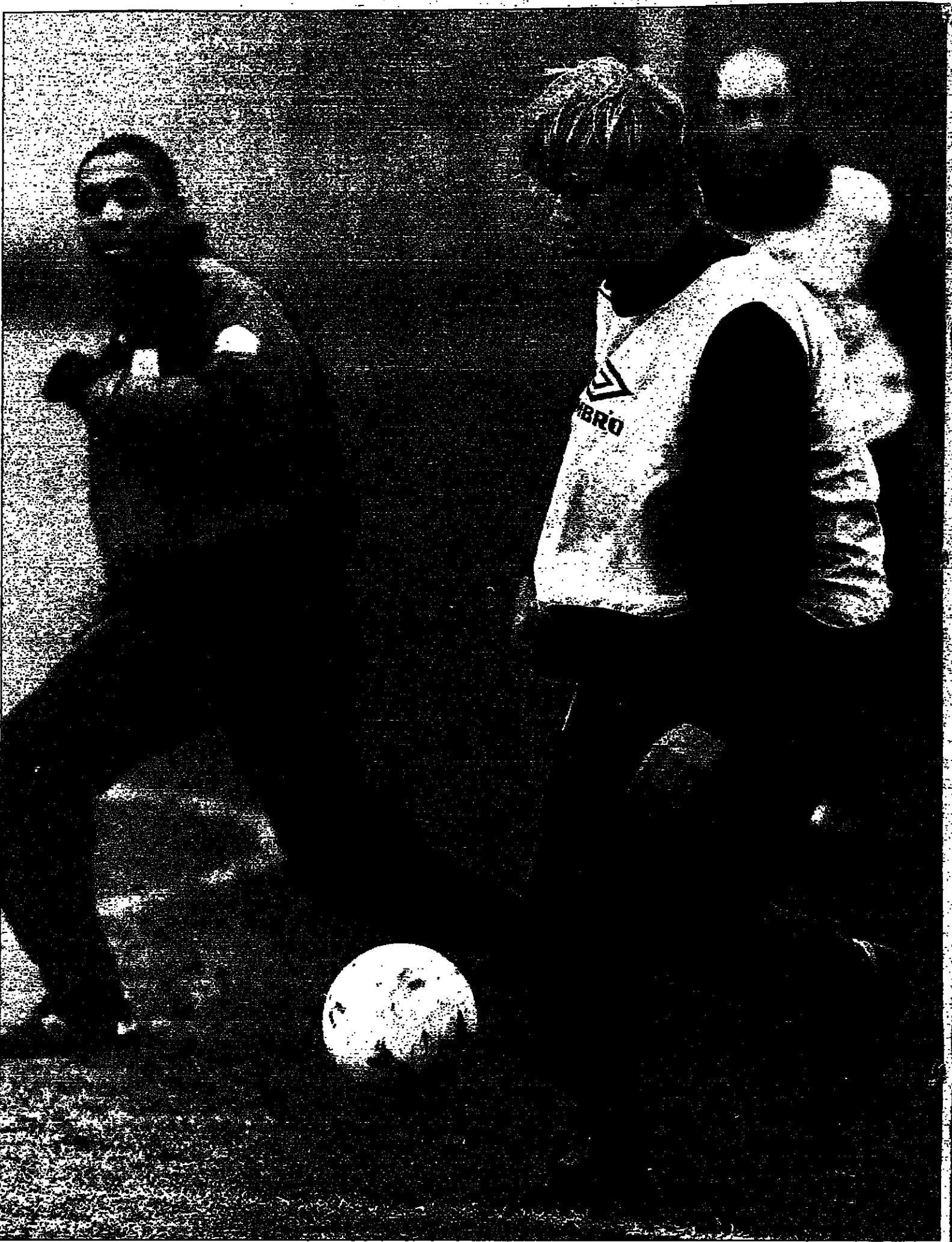
General Anghel Iordanescu, coach of European Championship finalists Romania, resigned yesterday, saying his allegations of match rigging in local championships had been ignored.

"I want to give up training the national team because I have repeatedly warned about match rigging, and measures to redress [that situation] have been delayed," Iordanescu said.

Romania will compete alongside Spain, Bulgaria and France in Euro 96 Group B, which is based in Newcastle and Leeds.



The success story of the championship was Scotland. In Italy they were awful, on paper they were moderate, but a well balanced back-row and gifted half-backs can take you a long way in rugby. Mark Evans, the Saracens coach, gives a critical overview of the Five Nations.



Bryan Roy (left) watches his Nottingham Forest team-mate, Alf Inge Haaland, in training for their Uefa Cup match tonight Photograph: Empics

## Lottery money sought to fund future success

### Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

British athletics is submitting a major National Lottery bid this week which could transform the parlous financial position of the sport in this country and underpin the development of elite performers through to the year 2002.

The bid, which seeks several million pounds in funding spread over the next six years, has been put together by Mike Whittingham, the former Olympic 400 metres hurdler who now coaches athletes such as Roger Black and acts as a consultant for the British Athletic Federation.

It seeks to establish a co-ordinated programme of services for elite and developing athletes which will provide everything from medical back-up to funding for training breaks and competitive opportunities.

Such an idea has been mooted in the past, but has foundered on two main points. The first has been a straightforward lack of funding - at last Saturday's BAF annual meeting, the outgoing treasurer, John Lister, announced an operating loss of £174,000 for last year and warned of "painful" years ahead.

The second vexed area has been the linking of such services with undertakings for elite athletes to take part in Britain's major televised meetings, an arrangement which was met with some suspicion within the sport.

Whittingham's proposal was developed through discussions with the BAF executive chairman, Peter Radford, the director of coaching, Malcolm Arnold, the chief medical officer, Dr Malcolm Brown, and the athletes' consultative group, headed by Black and Geoff Parson. It intends to provide sufficient funding for the programme to exist on its own.

"British athletics can no longer rely on ebb and flow of the market place," Whittingham said. "In the past it has been a Catch-22 situation - the federation has had to look after elite performers because they bring in TV and commercial money, and the cake simply wasn't big enough to go round."

"The idea behind this programme is that becomes separate from the commercial side. It allows services to stand on their own two feet. And if athletes can see that, they will be only too willing to build a closer partnership with the sport."

Whittingham envisages that around 1,000 athletes would benefit from the programme over a six-year period that encompasses 43 major championships, including two Olympic Games. It would chime in with the philosophy of government assistance which has been operating with increasing success in countries such as Portugal, Spain and France.

"Everyone is wondering where the next Linford Christie, Sally Gunnell or Colin Jackson is going to come through," Whittingham said. "They are going to come through from this programme."

The initiative is timed to fit in with the widening of Lottery funding from capital to revenue projects which was announced in principle in February.

Whittingham attended the launch of the Prime Minister's sporting initiative, Raising The Game, in July and took the opportunity to hand John Major a synopsis of his plan.

He has since made presentations alongside Arnold, to both the Minister for Sport, Iain Sproat, and the Shadow Minister for Sport, Tom Pendrey.

"We had very positive feedback from both of them," Whittingham said.

## Bruno waits as Tyson marches on

### Boxing

Frank Bruno was considering retirement when he arrived back in London yesterday, as the world champion, Mike Tyson, contemplated more riches and more glory.

"I'm not too sure," he said when asked whether he planned to retire after losing his World Boxing Council title. "I'll answer that in a couple of weeks' time. I'm going to try to spend some

time with my family, relax, just chill out, and recharge my batteries."

In Las Vegas, however, the talk was of unification of the belts, with Tyson aiming at the World Boxing Association champion, Bruce Seldon, at the MGM Grand on 13 July, followed by South Africa's international Boxing Federation heavyweight champion, Frans Botha, who first has to meet former champion Michael Moorer.

Botha, who tested positive for

steroids after his title victory over Axel Schulz in December, yesterday threw down the gauntlet, declaring: "Tyson's strong and powerful, but he has no skill. I'm the white Muhammad Ali."

Britain's Lennox Lewis, by virtue of Friday's New Jersey court ruling, is next in line for the WBC title, and should find himself back at No 1 in the April list of rankings, although a revitalised Oliver McCall is now jostling him for pole position to take on Tyson.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD in association with

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No. 2938, Tuesday 19 March By Aelred Monday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

**ACROSS**

- Depart humorously as insect's let out and away (6,3)
- One who comes out about living? (4)
- Bend box accommodating old women (2,3)
- CLA has penalty imposed because of money (9)
- Blunder traps Irish animal (7)
- Moral quibble which has little gravity (7)
- Intimate his changes after taking a new drug (13)
- Sue, junior, sins grievously, revealing a harmful nature (13)

**DOWN**

- British hooligan gets American carriage (8)
- Young reporter catches one VIP over description of plague (7)
- Convict in hat is working the fields (7)
- Show there's no blame for old copper damaging plate (9)
- One adhesive said to be suitable for home use? (5)
- Time to beg for work (4)
- Pleased to be put back in the dark? (9)

**STAMPEDE ASSURE**

1 APPRAISE ISSUE  
2 GLEY OBSERVE  
3 GADIN THE MOLE  
4 NISG  
5 HAVENOTIMEFOR  
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7 CHILDMENA MOCHA  
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9 ANNUAL FLAGGING  
10 LIT  
11 NUMB INSURANCE

2 Honour accepted by Queen which shows a bit of warmth (5)  
3 In which the fittest will survive as a rule, being wild (3,2,3,6)  
4 Harry has work on paper? (7)  
5 This could be florid if such a novel (7)  
6 Make charge about woman holding power to desecrate (9)  
7 It helps one relax for the rest of the 24 hours? (3,3)  
8 Retailing which amounts to doing nothing and cheating (7,7)  
9 Dogs will need support in slow-moving traffic (4,5)  
10 A drug which is out of this world? (8)  
11 Man's free to eat fish (7)  
12 Nothing at breakfast, say? This might do (7)  
13 Protest as outside broadcast requires 100 to be put in place (6)  
14 Assign a charge for crossing over (5)

Win a Weekend Break or a case of Bombardier Premium Bitter  
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When you have the answers to the first three clues across AND the first three clues down phone 0491 311 017 and leave your answers with your name address and daytime telephone number by midnight tonight. Each day there is a case of Charles Wells Bombardier Premium Bitter to win. PLUS from all entries for the week a winner will be selected for a Weekend Break for two in a Charles Wells Country Hotel. Calls cost 20p per minute, cheap rate, 40p per minute all other times. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received. No cash alternative. Normal Newspaper Publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final. Winners' names can be obtained by sending an SAE to - Charles Wells Crossword, Unit A, Bowe House, St Peter's Road, Maidenhead SL6 7DU

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